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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 16, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HAROLD ROGERS 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 will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

VETERANS LEGISLATION

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of three veterans' bills the House considered this week and passed. I would like my constituents to know how the House is working to better serve our veterans, and I want to specifically focus on the WINGMAN Act, which we passed.

Mr. Speaker, enabling caseworkers to more efficiently handle the casework that we receive from veterans is critically important. Right now, my office, much like most Members in Congress, is experiencing a tremendously high volume of phone calls and office visits about a multitude of issues; and I welcome that continued energy and interest from my constituents.

I also want to remind everyone that a central function of congressional district offices—perhaps its most important day-to-day function—is to be a clearinghouse for solving a variety of problems for our constituents and a resource to help them. And the caseworkers in our district offices do an exceptional job. That is why enhancing the tools available to caseworkers to more efficiently serve veterans can result in more cases being effectively administered and answers provided to veterans.

This week we took an important step in streamlining this process by passing the WINGMAN Act. This bill would allow caseworkers to access read-only versions of veterans' records without having to first contact the Department of Veterans Affairs. This is if a veteran grants their congressional office this access.

It is important to note that casework staff is already trained to handle this sensitive information as part of their work to serve constituents who are veterans. I was pleased to support this bill and believe it will have a positive result for veterans seeking assistance from my office in Pennsylvania and veterans across the country.

In fact, I did ask for some comments from caseworkers in my office in Wyomissing and West Chester; and I especially want to thank them for the above-and-beyond, 110 percent effort that they are giving day in and day out. Particularly, at this point in time, with such a high volume of phone calls and office visits, they are still getting their casework done.

This bill that we passed in the House will help them further in helping veterans. Jason, my constituent services director, had this to say about the bill:

> The accountability piece is extremely important. This will allow us to see a more complete picture rather than just relying on what we are told by the VA. This should also help us triage the inquiries, thereby reducing the number of contacts we have to make to our VA liaisons, something they would probably welcome as well.

Lisa from my West Chester office indicated that she also believes it is a great initiative.

> It is important to note the claims process is a lengthy one. It would be beneficial to be able to periodically check in on the record to monitor its progress. Most times veterans say they would just like the VA to let them know that the claim is still being worked on rather than forgotten. It would let our office provide that information without the added steps of contacting VA employees.

Patrick, from my Wyomissing office, a veteran himself, said that:

> In my view, it is an interesting concept which would allow us to move more swiftly from information gatherer to advocate for cases that legitimately warrant it. Oftentimes, there is a significant lag time between placing the inquiry and receiving substantive feedback, at which time we will then have to make the judgment if further action is justified. It would also appear to hold the VA more accountable as well to outside eyes, which is also very much needed. So it sounds good to me.

Mr. Speaker, it also sounds good to me, and I believe it will do good for veterans across this country. I am pleased to see it pass the House, and I encourage the Senate to move swiftly on it.

TREDYFFRIN/EASTTOWN WINS MATHCOUNTS COMPETITION FOR THIRD YEAR

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about MATHCOUNTS, a national program designed to improve math skills among U.S. students. The 2017 MATHCOUNTS competition series will consist of approximately 40,000 students.

Twenty-three schools with 182 students competed in the 32nd Chester

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County MATHCOUNTS competition at Great Valley Middle School recently. I want to commend Tredyffrin/Easttown School District, specifically Tredyffrin/Easttown Middle School and also the Valley Forge Middle School of the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District for placing in the top six schools, as well as the following other schools in my congressional district: Great Valley Middle School, Lionville Middle School of the Downingtown Area School District, and J.R. Fugett Middle School of the West Chester Area School District.

Congratulations to all schools involved, all students participating.

I want to thank all the teachers, staff, and administrators who helped make MATHCOUNTS an enjoyable, enriching experience for all the students.

DEBATE OVER PUERTO RICO'S FUTURE

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I will speak in Spanish to the people of Puerto Rico. The translation is at the desk.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Mr. Speaker: I am going to speak Spanish, the language of Puerto Ricans because democracy demands transparency and clarity.

The essence of the debate over Puerto Rico's future is the difference between assimilation, represented in the legislation proposed by Resident Commissioner Jenniffer Gonzalez (H.R. 260) and the legislation I have introduced (H.R. 900).

I have never excluded statehood. The assimilationists have excluded independence and free association from their proposals.

What my legislation does is simply add balance and corrects a disequilibrium.

From now on, the debate is between the assimilationist leaders and the people, the Puertoricanists. Assimilation is not the only option before the Congress of the United States.

My bill proposes free association and independence as options. This is what the Puertoricanists propose.

What motivates us? The love of Puerto Rico and defending our heritage; believing that we can be self-sufficient; believing that we can determine our own future without masters; believing in ourselves. The Puertoricanists are convinced that we can create jobs in a strong and vibrant economy with people who are innovative, creative and completely capable of determining their own future.

The assimilationist leaders think that we'll starve to death without the United States.

The Puertoricanists do not arrest students when they lift their voices in defense of democracy. That is what the assimilationist leaders do.

The Puertoricanists believe that first you pay the pensions of working people, while the assimilationists prefer to pay American bondholders on Wall Street.

The Puertoricanists love and protect the land. The assimilationists want to destroy it by constructing pipelines.

The Puertoricanists understand that democracy must flourish. The free expression of the people is sacred. Assimilationist leaders, when they don't like what they hear from the people, call in the riot squad.

Assimilationist leaders haven't attacked what my legislation would do, they have attacked its proponents.

Assimilationists want Members of Congress to only hear their version of the future. They are annoyed because this Member has brought before the Congress the other two options, which, in fact, are the options up for a plebiscite vote in Puerto Rico this year. In Puerto Rico, they want one reality and in the Congress they pretend there is another.

No, with my bill we have balance, truth and transparency. This is democracy. In this Puertoricanists believe: debate, discussion, freedom of ideas. Assimilationist leaders throughout history have chased and jailed Puertoricanists, and when they did not jail them, they took them to Cerro Maravilla.

Assimilationists say the Puertoricanists are anti-American. No, the Puertoricanists and anti-colonialists. They want for Puerto Rico the sovereignty enjoyed and celebrated in the United States. Yes, the Puertoricanists want the same thing the Americans have, to live in a free and sovereign nation where we determine our own destiny without masters.

Puertoricanists see the sun and see the energy we can harvest; see the land and the food we can eat.

Puertoricanists are motivated by love of country, love of our heritage and the understanding that we can be great, that we are intelligent and capable of innovation and creativity.

From my infancy in exile in the United States I listened to the song ''Preciosa'' and came to understand that the tyrant—the dark evil—is American colonialism. So said Rafael Hernandez, the singing conscience of my people.

Puertoricanists longingly recall the song ''En mi Viejo San Juan (In my Old San Juan)'' where it says ''this strange nation,'' just as Puerto Ricans in the U.S. say ''this is not my land''—when they confront abuse, discrimination and racism. ''Puerto Rico is.''

The Puerto Rican is his diaspora, from New York to Chicago, San Juan to Ponce, we are all Puerto Ricans. As our national poet, Juan Antonio Corretjer, wrote: ''I would be Puerto Rican even if I were born on the moon.'' To which I would add, with a great deal of respect, ''I would be Puerto Rican, even if I lived on the moon.''

Señor presidente: Voy a hablar en español, el vernáculo de los puertorriqueños porque la democracia exige transparencia y claridad.

La esencia del debate acerca del futuro de Puerto Rico es la diferencia entre el asimilismo, representado por el proyecto presentado por Jenniffer González, y el que yo presenté.

Yo nunca he excluido la estadidad. Los asimilistas han excluido la independencia y la libre asociación.

Lo que hace mi proyecto es sencillamente traer balance, corregir un desequilibrio.

De aquí en adelante, el debate es entre los líderes asimilistas y el pueblo, los puertorriqueñistas. La asimilación ya no es la única opción ante el Congreso.

Mi proyecto propone la libre asociación y la independencia. Eso es lo que proponen los puertorriqueñistas.

¿Qué nos motiva a los puertorriqueñistas? El amor a Puerto Rico; defender su herencia; creen que podemos ser autosuficientes; creen que podemos determinar nuestro futuro sin tener amos; creen en sí mismos. Están convencidos que podemos crear empleos, con una economía fuerte y vibrante de un pueblo innovador, creativo, y totalmente capaz de determinar su propio futuro.

Los líderes asimilistas piensan que nos morimos de hambre sin los Estados Unidos.

Los puertorriqueñistas no macanean a los estudiantes cuando levantan su voz en defensa de la democracia—eso lo hacen los lideres asimilistas.

Los puertorriqueñistas creen que primero hay que pagar las pensiones al pueblo mientras los asimilistas prefieren pagar los bonistas norteamericanos de Wall Street.

Los puertorriqueñistas aman y protegen su tierra. Los asimilistas quieren destruirla construyendo un gasoducto.

Los puertorriqueñistas entienden que la democracia debe florecer. La libre expresión del pueblo es sagrada. Los líderes asimilistas, cuando no les gusta lo que escuchan del pueblo, llaman a la fuerza de choque.

Los líderes asimilistas no han atacado lo que propone mi proyecto. Ellos atacan al proponente.

Los asimilistas quieren que los congresistas solamente escucharan su versión del futuro. Están molestos porque este congresista ha traído antes el Congreso las otras dos alternativas, que de hecho, se van a votar en el plebiscito de Puerto Rico. En Puerto Rico quieren una realidad, y los asimilistas en el Congreso quieren pretender que hay otra.

No, con mi proyecto, aquí va a haber balance, verdad y transparencia: esa es la democracia, en eso creemos los puertorriqueñistas—el debate, la discusión y la libertad de ideas. Los líderes asimilistas, a través de la historia han perseguido y metido a los puertorriqueñistas en la cárcel, y si no en la cárcel, los llevan hasta Cerro Maravilla.

Los asimilistas dicen que los puertorriqueñistas son antiamericanos. No y no. Los puertorriqueñistas son

anticoloniales. Quieren para Puerto Rico la soberanía que tienen y disfrutan los norteamericanos. ¡Sí, así es! Los puertorriqueñistas quieren lo mismo que tienen los norteamericanos: vivir en una nación libre y soberana donde ellos mismos dictan su futuro y no tienen amo.

Los puertorriqueñistas ven el sol y ven energía que podemos cosechar. Ven la tierra y ven alimentos que nos darán de comer.

Los puertorriqueñistas están motivados por el amor a la patria y su herencia, y el conocimiento de que podemos ser grandes, que tenemos la inteligencia y la capacidad de innovar y crear.

Desde mi infancia en el destierro en Estados Unidos escuché la canción ''Preciosa'' y vine a entender que el tirano, la negra maldad es el colonialismo norteamericano. Lo dijo Rafael Hernández, la conciencia cantada de mi pueblo.

Los puertorriqueñistas recuerdan con añoranza su patria ''En mi Viejo San Juan'' la canción que dice ''. . . esa extraña nación'', como decían los boricuas en Estado Unidos, ''esta no es mi tierra,'' cuando confrontaban el abuso, discriminación y racismo. Puerto Rico lo es.

El puertorriqueño es su diáspora de Nueva York a Chicago, de San Juan a Ponce, todos somos puertorriqueños. Como escribió nuestro poeta nacional, Juan Antonio Corretjer, ''Yo sería boricua aunque naciera en la luna''. Y, añado con todo el respeto, ''sería boricua aun si viviese en la luna''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide the Clerk a translation of his remarks.

A CENTURY OF SUCCESS

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Mackenthun's Fine Foods in Waconia, Minnesota, for 100 years of business success.

At the beginning of the 20th century, August Mackenthun began a family tradition of making homemade sausage. This tradition was commercialized in 1917 when his son, Arthur, bought a sausage maker from Germany and opened Mackenthun's Meat Market in Waconia.

What began as a modest business quickly transformed into a booming success as Mackenthun's developed a reputation for producing quality meats.

Today, the business is run by Kim and Laurie Mackenthun and their family. While it is now a full-service supermarket, they have maintained the family tradition by offering their signature homemade sausage in the meat department.

Congratulations to the entire Mackenthun family for their 100-year commitment to the family business, for upholding their longstanding tradition, and for exemplifying the American Dream.

We wish you another century of success.

A LEGEND LOST

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and career of a legendary Minnesotan who passed away just last week. Ray Christensen was a renowned sportscaster in the North Star State and best known for his radio play-by-play for the Minnesota Golden Gophers.

A native-born Minnesotan, Ray grew up in Minneapolis and bravely served our country in World War II. After returning from the war, Ray attended the University of Minnesota where he lettered in baseball.

Upon graduation, Ray began his career announcing Gopher football games for WCCO in 1951 and basketball games in 1956. Ray worked for WCCO as a sportscaster until 2001 and was inducted into the Minnesota Broadcast Hall of Fame in 2002.

Ray was the voice that we all grew up with. His voice was the one that we listened to every game day, and Minnesota athletics will certainly not be the same without him. I speak for all Minnesotans when I say that he will truly be missed.

A TOP MINNESOTA SCHOOL

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Delano Elementary School in my district for being recognized as a Reward School for the fourth time in the past 5 years.

In order to be categorized as a Reward School, the school must be in the top 15 percent of the highest performing schools in the State. Delano Elementary School's updated curriculum, improved physical education program, and new music classes are the best.

□ 1015

A good education opens all of life's doors, and I would like to thank Delano Elementary School for giving Minnesota students the key. Your dedication to our children deserves recognition, and I am proud to congratulate your work here today.

HONORING CLINTON COLLEGE AND MORRIS COLLEGE IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as part of the observation of Black History Month, to continue my series of remarks recognizing HBCUs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities. I am asking my colleagues to join me in celebrating Clinton College, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and Morris College, in my hometown of Sumter.

Clinton College was founded in 1894 by the A.M.E. Zion Church, under the leadership of Presiding Elder Nero A. Crockett and Reverend W.M. Robinson to combat illiteracy of former slaves. The institution was named for Bishop Caleb Clinton, then the presiding bishop of the Palmetto Annual Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Originally named Clinton Institute, in 1909, it was renamed Clinton Normal and Industrial Institute, and was authorized to grant State teaching certificates.

In the late 1940s, the school was again reorganized as Clinton Junior College, offering various associate degrees in religion and other liberal arts. Still affiliated with the A.M.E. Zion Church, the college has grown and expanded under its current president, Dr. Elaine J. Copeland, who has led the institution since 2002.

In 2013, the college, for the first time, was accredited to offer two bachelor's degree programs, a bachelor of arts in religious studies, and a bachelor of science in business administration. Subsequently, it has changed its name to Clinton College, and enrollment is at a 15-year high.

For the past 120 years, Clinton College has been providing academic excellence, as well as instilling moral and spiritual growth into their students. The college takes pride in being, and I quote its motto, ''A Beacon of Light for Today's Scholars and Tomorrow's Leaders.''

I thank all of my colleagues for joining me in honoring Clinton College today.

Morris College was established in my hometown of Sumter, South Carolina, by the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina in 1908, to provide religious and educational training to African Americans. Originally, the college featured elementary and high school education, as well as a college curriculum. Its college offered teaching certificates and degrees in liberal arts and theology. In the 1930s and 1940s, Morris dropped its elementary and high school programs and became solely a liberal arts and religious college.

Morris' graduates include First Lieutenant Leroy Bowman, who was part of the original class of Tuskegee Airmen. These African-American pilots trained in a segregated complex near Tuskegee, Alabama, and the Walterboro Army Air Field in Colleton County, South Carolina.

First Lieutenant Bowman served in World War II, flew 36 combat missions over Germany, and had a decorated service record. He was among 300 surviving Tuskegee Airmen honored with the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush.

My mother graduated from Morris College in 1953, when I was 12 years old. My father studied theology at Morris in the early 1940s for 3 years, but was not allowed to finish his studies because he had not graduated high school. Having been born in 1897, in segregated South Carolina, he was not

allowed to advance beyond the seventh grade. But because he continued to self-teach and study, he was able to pass the college entrance exam. Though he was not allowed to graduate in 1945, as he should have, he was posthumously awarded his bachelor of theology degree 58 years later, in 2003.

Having been led by Dr. Luns Richardson for the past 43 years, Morris College has grown to an enrollment over 1,000. Under President Richardson, Morris has established an Army ROTC unit, joined the United Negro College Fund, and has constructed 18 new campus buildings.

Reverend Dr. Charles Jackson, president and chairman of Morris' board of trustees, recently announced that President Richardson will retire this summer, leaving Morris well-poised for the future.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Clinton and Morris Colleges in celebration of Black History Month.

RECOGNIZING MARY GROSSE

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Mary Grosse, from Tybee Island, Georgia. At 85 years young, she remarkably set a USA Track & Field Masters Outdoor 10K record.

She accomplished this during the 2016 Enmarket Savannah Bridge Run, where she finished with a time of 1 hour, 35 minutes, and 59 seconds. Not only did that time win her the 80 to 98 age group, but it also placed her in the top 10 of the women's 65 to 69 age group.

With her passion for exercise, Ms. Grosse has gained local celebrity status on Tybee Island, where the locals greet her as she walks her daily 6-mile route.

In 1964, Ms. Grosse moved to Tybee Island after working as an FBI secretary in Washington for several years. In 1971, Ms. Grosse and her family opened The Sugar Shack, which is now a staple of the Tybee Island community.

Her daily walks, for the past 30 years, have been a positive outlet for her and kept both her body and mind young over the years. Her dedication serves as inspiration for her family and the community.

I am proud to congratulate Ms. Grosse on her new record, but also recognize her for her positive attitude, her dedication, and her contributions to Tybee Island.

FAILURE OF OBAMACARE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss how ObamaCare has impacted families in the First District of Georgia.

I want to share the story of the Joiner family from southeast Georgia. Bob Joiner is an independent wealth adviser. His wife, Kim, works at a small practice as an audiologist. They have a 28-year-old son named Wesley.

Bob, Kim, and Wesley are healthy individuals who exercise regularly and eat healthy. Before ObamaCare, the Joiner family's annual premium was $7,428 for the whole family. At that time, the Joiners had the ability to choose from multiple providers and dozens of healthcare plans. Unfortunately, thanks to ObamaCare, this is no longer the case for the Joiners.

In 2016, Bob's monthly healthcare premium skyrocketed 134 percent, and Wesley's increased an incredible 190 percent. In total, the family's 2016 annual premiums were $4,285 for Wesley, and $19,026 for Bob and Kim.

Let me repeat that. In total, the family's 2016 annual premiums were $4,285 for Wesley, and $19,026 for Bob and Kim.

The Joiners had hoped to change their plan in 2017 to something more affordable but found only one ObamaCare-compliant plan to choose from. Now, the family worries about their ability to pay down their mortgage and save for retirement because of increasing healthcare costs. And the Joiners aren't alone.

I hear similar stories all the time as I travel the district, because ObamaCare has brought chaos into our healthcare system. Patients in south Georgia and across America deserve better. That is why we are on a mission to resuscitate our healthcare system.

CENTRAL AMERICAN REFUGEES

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about one of the consequences of Donald Trump's refugee ban that has so far been ignored.

The day after Donald Trump issued his executive order to ban refugees and all citizens from seven Muslim majority countries, four children from El Salvador landed in Miami International Airport.

It is a short flight from El Salvador, but the children had been waiting a long time to come here. In 2015, they applied to come here through the Central American Minors program that was started in 2014 as a safe and legal way for a limited—a very small—number of children from Central America.

After submitting to DNA tests, screenings, and a long application process, they were finally given visas, and they were on their way here. However, after landing at Miami and passing through the Customs and Border Protection screening, and on their way to their connecting flight, they were stopped and pulled into a secondary inspection. For six long hours, these children were detained in a cold room without food or water.

These children had done everything right, and waited a long time to flee a very traumatic situation. They came here, and their first experience was to be treated like criminals.

This is just one example of how Trump's hasty, harmful executive order is undermining our American values. It is just one more reason why, instead of rewriting it, as he says that he is doing, he should rescind it altogether.

But, of course, these children are the lucky ones, the fortunate few who got a chance to come here legally.

Many of my colleagues will recall that, in the summer of 2014, thousands of children from Central America arrived at our southern border. Those children were fleeing gangs and violence. Many of them turned themselves in to the Border Patrol. They were not trying to sneak in to our country. They were asking for asylum. They were asking for relief and protection.

We knew that if we were going to stop kids from making that dangerous journey to come here, some of them walking over 1,000 miles to our southern border, that we would have to tackle the root causes that compelled them to leave. So the leaders of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, with some help from General John Kelly, came up with a plan to bring some stability to those three countries. And Congress, working on a bipartisan basis, provided some financial support.

But even as we make long-term investments in the Northern Triangle, we need to deal with the fact that children from these countries still need our protection in the short-term. That is why the Obama administration created a few programs to help a very small number of those children.

Those children did what we asked them. They didn't come across our border. They didn't cross Mexico. They waited in line as they were told, even if waiting in line meant staying in harm's way. Because of Donald Trump's executive order, those children now face a very uncertain future.

Lost in the media coverage of this order is the suspension of the refugee program, blockage of these vulnerable children as well. I am glad that the judge has stayed the order. I hope that the President will respect the judge's order.

But more than that, I hope that the President will take a real look at all the harm that he has already caused for so many people, including so many innocent children. I hope that he puts an end to his cruel, counterproductive executive order once and for all.

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

□ 1030

RECOGNIZING SMC MANUFACTURING SERVICES

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a cutting-edge aerospace and defense company located in the Sixth Congressional District of Kentucky, SMC Manufacturing Services.

For more than 30 years, the Coats family has been the epitome of Kentucky ingenuity and progress. In 1978, they began Southland Manufacturing Company, which has evolved into SMC Manufacturing Services, and now employ more than 140 people at its Nicholasville, Kentucky, headquarters.

Recently, I had the chance to visit SMC and tour their 45,000-square-foot facility, which helps to build components for the Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station, or CROWS. This product is a stabilized mount that contains a sensor suite and fire control software, allowing on-the-move target acquisition and first-burst target engagement.

This facility has increased by 20,000 square feet in 2016 and has the ability to house more than 300 employees, drawing its employees from counties in the Sixth District and surrounding counties.

However, SMC not only supplies companies in Kentucky, but across the United States and abroad. One example of where SMC supports the defense of this Nation is their partnership with Kongsberg Protech Systems, KPS, of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, which is located in the district of my friend and colleague Congressman KEITH ROTHFUS.

Today, with more than 15,000 CROWS in service, this weapon system can be found on more than 25 different platforms in the United States arsenal, including the Stryker, MRAP, Abrams, and Amphibious Combat Vehicle. It is a tested, proven system that is relied on by the Army, the Navy, and the Marines.

I applaud SMC for being a veteran-friendly workplace and a manufacturing company that is proud to employ about an equal number of men and women. I am pleased to support job-creating manufacturing companies like SMC and KPS which positively impact States like Kentucky and help to strengthen our national security capabilities while supporting our veterans.

THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today out of deep concern about the safety and security of the community that I represent and of this country.

El Paso, Texas, the city that I am so fortunate to serve and represent in Congress, happens to be the safest city not just in the State of Texas, but in the entire United States. There are a number of reasons for that: We have outstanding local law enforcement, whether it is the Sheriff's Department or El Paso City Police, State DPS troopers or Federal law enforcement, Border Patrol agents, Customs and Border Protection officers, and the agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

A big part of the explanation for our safety is the fact that 24 percent of the people that I represent were born in another country. They have come to this country to do better, to get ahead, and to contribute to our success and to the American Dream. It is also because everyone in the community of El Paso feels comfortable and safe in reporting crime, in testifying and coming forward—especially in cases of domestic abuse—to local authorities.

That is why I am so concerned after I received a call last night from the El Paso County judge, Veronica Escobar, to share with me an incident that happened last week in the El Paso County Courthouse, where a woman, undocumented Mexican national, had gone to the Center Against Sexual and Family Violence out of fear for her life after being abused, she alleged, by her boyfriend.

The Center Against Sexual and Family Violence escorted her to the El Paso County Courthouse to receive a protection order. The judge granted that order. But in that courtroom where the judge granted the order were, according to the county attorney, the county judge, and the judge who presided over that trial, agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement who escorted the domestic abuse survivor out of the courthouse and into detention and perhaps deportation to Mexico.

We will not continue to be the safest city in America. We will not continue to contribute to the safety of the United States and to the State of Texas if people don't feel comfortable reporting domestic abuse, reporting crimes, serving as witnesses, and working with law enforcement.

I urge this President, this administration, to send an unequivocal message to the Federal agents working in El Paso and every single one of our communities that it is imperative for the safety and security of this country and every person who is in this country that we respect all people of all communities regardless of their immigration status.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

We are the safest community in the United States because every person in our community feels safe. They feel safe because they can report crime to the authorities; they can report cases of domestic abuse to the authorities. And, through our work together, we are the safest city. We are going to lose this if we can't continue on this manner. If anyone has a question or problem about this, please contact my office at (915) 541–1400.

Somos la comunidad más segura de los Estados Unidos porque cualquier persona en nuestra comunidad se siente segura. Se siente segura porque puede reportar el crimen a las autoridades, pueden reportar los casos de abuso doméstico a las autoridades. Y trabajando juntos, somos la ciudad más segura. Vamos a perder esto si no podemos continuar en esta manera. Si alguien tiene pregunta o problema con esto, por favor llámenos a nuestra oficina (915) 541–1400.

Mr. Speaker, if anyone in the community of El Paso is concerned, fears that they will not be able to come forward to report crime or domestic abuse, has a question and wants my help, I want to be there for them. They need to call me: (915) 541–1400.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to be the safest city in America when every member of our community feels safe, can work with law enforcement, and when law enforcement respects every single member of our community.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas will provide a translation of his remarks to the Clerk.

THE IMPACT OF REPEALING TITLE X REGULATIONS

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

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the title X resolution of disapproval that will be on the floor later today.

This misguided resolution will limit access to critical healthcare services by allowing States to cherry-pick which family planning providers they want to participate in the title X program.

Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans rely on family planning clinics for cancer screenings, well-woman exams, birth control, and sexually transmitted disease screenings and treatment. Eighty-five percent of the people served by these clinics have incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level, and 48 percent of them are uninsured. Furthermore, at least half of family planning clinics are located in rural and underserved communities already with limited access to health care.

If this resolution passes, politicians in any State or community will be able to interfere with eligible and competent title X providers who care for the most vulnerable and underserved in our country. The only factors that should ever dictate eligibility to provide family planning health services are professional competency and State licensure.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.J. Res. 43 and protect healthcare access for 4 million Americans who rely on the title X clinics for their care.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I include in the RECORD the names of the men and women who died in World War

II while posted in Normandy, specifically the African-American men and women whom I will speak about.

NAMES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN BURIED AT NORMANDY AMERICAN CEMETERY (NAC)

The 320th Battalion served with distinction during the D-Day invasion of Normandy, France on June 6, 1944. That day, the 320th lost two of their own, Corporals Brooks Stith and Henry Harris.

CPL Brooks Stith was born in 1922. While he was originally from North Carolina, he enlisted in the Army in Richmond, VA in December 1942. Corporal Stith had a family and made a living working with metal before the war. He was decorated with the Purple Heart, American Campaign Medal, and WWII Victory Medal.

CPL Henry J. Harris was born in 1907. While he was originally from Pennsylvania, he enlisted in the Army in Boston, MA in April 1941. He was single and worked in furniture manufacturing before the war. Corporal Harris was decorated with the Purple Heart, American Campaign Medal, and WWII Victory Medal.

PFC James M. McLean was born in 1922 and enlisted in the Army at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in December 1942. He was single and worked as a farm laborer before the war. Private First Class McLean was decorated with the American Campaign Medal, and WWII Victory Medal. He was a member of the 320th who died later on July 16, 1944.

Others buried at the NAC are listed below:

PFC Elihue E. Baltimore from Indiana of 963 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 28th, 1945. He was 27 years old. PFC Elihue E. Baltimore is buried in plot B, row 3, grave number 20. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PFC Howard Anderson from Virginia of 3878 QM GAS SUP CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 6th, 1944. He was 32 years old. PFC Howard Anderson is buried in plot B, row 6, grave number 43. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

CPL Roy Bell from Pennsylvania of 237 QM SALV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. He was 21 years old. CPL Roy Bell is buried in plot G, row 13, grave number 12. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PVT James Blair from South Carolina of 4090 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 10th, 1944. He was 22 years old. PVT James Blair is buried in plot A, row 1, grave number 37. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PVT John S. Brannon, Jr. from Massachusetts of 502 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 7th, 1944. He was 29 years old. PVT John S. Brannon, Jr. is buried in plot H, row 25, grave number 3. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PVT Vernon F. Campbell from New York of 237 QM SALV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. He was 24 years old. PVT Vernon F. Campbell is buried in plot J, row 6, grave number 35. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PVT Andrew Collins, Jr. from Wisconsin of 237 QM SALV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. PVT Andrew Collins, Jr. is buried in plot J, row 12, grave number 35. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

SGT Willie L. Collins from Georgia of 490 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 6th, 1944. He was 22 years old. SGT Willie L. Collins is buried in plot F, row 28, grave number 31. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

TEC 4 Oscar W. Davis from Texas of 815 TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 10th, 1944. TEC 4 Oscar W. Davis is buried in plot D, row 11, grave number 25. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

TEC 5 Howard F. Ellis from Virginia of 237 QM SALV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. He was 38 years old. TEC 5 Howard F. Ellis is buried in plot E, row 13, grave number 14. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

TEC 5 William Gray from Mississippi of 3393 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 28th, 1944. He was 20 years old. TEC 5 William Gray is buried in plot C, row 9, grave number 16. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

M SGT Zylphus L. Greene from Pennsylvania of 237 QM SALV COLL CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. He was 27 years old. M SGT Zylphus L. Greene is buried in plot B, row 8, grave number 44. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PVT Charlie G. Harvey from Illinois of 3275 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 27th, 1944. He was 22 years old. PVT Charlie G. Harvey is buried in plot I, row 16, grave number 10. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

CPL Joseph N. Headd from New Jersey of 3912 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 16th, 1944. CPL Joseph N. Headd is buried in plot J, row 26, grave number 28. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

SGT Luther J. Irvin, Jr. from Indiana of 237 QM SALV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. He was 29 years old. SGT Luther J. Irvin, Jr. is buried in plot G, row 19, grave number 31. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PVT Eugene Jones from Illinois of 3275 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 30th, 1944. He was 22 years old. PVT Eugene Jones is buried in plot G, row 24, grave number 17. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

CPL James A. Long from Mississippi of 4090 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 10th, 1944. He was 27 years old. CPL James A. Long is buried in plot A, row 18, grave number 37. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

1 SGT Willis G. Peele from North Carolina of 4454 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 21st, 1945. He was 29 years old. 1 SGT Willis G. Peele is buried in plot D, row 1, grave number 24. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

TEC 5 James G. Richardson from Texas of 237 QM SALV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. He was 34 years old. TEC 5 James G. Richardson is buried in plot H, row 5, grave number 19. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

TEC 5 Robert J. Self from Virginia of 237 QM SALV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 29th, 1944. He was 29 years old. TEC 5 Robert J. Self is buried in plot E, row 9, grave number 14. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

TEC 5 Edward J. Thompson from Mississippi of 388 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 6th, 1945. He was 28 years old. TEC 5 Edward J. Thompson is buried in plot D, row 13, grave number 41. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

TEC 5 Lee H. Watson from Arkansas of 494 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 12th, 1945. TEC 5 Lee H. Watson is buried in plot B, row 19, grave number 11. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PFC William D. Adams from Alabama of 1323 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 20th, 1944. He was 31 years old.

PFC Joseph Allen from Mississippi of 244 QM BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on February 3rd, 1945. He was 26 years old.

TEC 4 Florzell Anderson from New Jersey of 3116 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on January 19th, 1945. He was 23 years old.

PVT Issac R. Anderson, Jr. from South Carolina of 4148 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on December 31st, 1944. He was 20 years old.

PVT James R. Anderson from Indiana of 513 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on October 9th, 1944. He was 21 years old.

TEC 5 Alvin T. Austin from Texas of 549 ENGR L PON CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on December 9th, 1945.

TEC 5 Daniel Batts from Virginia of 485 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 20th, 1945. He was 38 years old.

PVT William E. Beadle from Georgia of 511 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 29th, 1945. He was 21 years old.

PVT E. L. Bolton from Tennessee of 3453 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 15th, 1945. He was 25 years old.

PVT Dan Bouie, Jr. from Georgia of 821 AMPH TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 21st, 1945. He was 20 years old.

SGT Bennie Boyd from South Carolina of 516 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 31st, 1945. He was 24 years old.

TEC 5 Rochester Boyd, Sr. from Florida of 3398 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 1st, 1944. He was 24 years old.

PVT Samuel S. Branson, Jr. from Pennsylvania of 4190 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 12th, 1944. He was 24 years old.

TEC 5 Clyde Bridges from Georgia of 3519 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 24th, 1945.

CPL Henry Brown from New Jersey of 999 FA BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 18th, 1944. He was 27 years old.

PFC Otis Brown from Georgia of 388 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on October 12th, 1944. He was 24 years old.

PFC William Law Campbell from New York of 435 ENGR DUMP TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 4th, 1945. He was 34 years old.

SGT Robert Carey from Lousiana of 3399 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 11th, 1944. He was 20 years old.

PFC Earlie Carothers from Mississippi of 364 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 7th, 1944. He was 25 years old.

PVT William Carter from Michigan of 3862 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 8th, 1944.

PVT Harold K. Chambers from Kansas of 452 AAA AW BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 6th, 1944.

PVT Len Cleveland from Georgia of 501 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on January 1st, 1945.

PFC Willie F. Cooper from Illinois of 399 QM LDRY CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 9th, 1944. He was 34 years old.

STM2C Clarence N. Copeland from New York of USNR served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 8th, 1944.

TEC 5 Eddie B. Culpepper, Jr. from Georgia of 17 SP SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 21st, 1945.

TEC 4 Hoyt N. Daniels, Jr. from Arkansas of 414 PORT CD served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 19th, 1945.

PFC William E. Davis from Pennsylvania of 515 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 26th, 1945. He was 21 years old.

TEC 4 Dawson E. Dennis from Pennsylvania of 658 PORT CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 20th, 1945. He was 31 years old.

PVT Cecil Dorsett from New York of 815 TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 24th, 1944. He was 34 years old.

CPL Edward L. Drasdell from Kentucky of 4270 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 5th, 1944.

CPL Randolph Easter from New York of 3867 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on January 21st, 1945. He was 33 years old.

TEC 5 Cyrus S. Elliott from Arkansas of 514 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 5th, 1944. He was 23 years old.

PVT Leo A. Fair from South Carolina of 4083 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 12th, 1944. He was 21 years old.

PFC Harold G. Foster from New York of 818 TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 12th, 1944. He was 28 years old.

PVT Sidney B. Fountain from Mississippi of 3135 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 3rd, 1945. He was 22 years old.

MS Earlie J. Gabriel from North Carolina of USMM served his country honorably during WWII and died on December 14th, 1944.

PVT Victor H. Gambles from Missouri of 365 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 4th, 1945. He was 32 years old.

TEC 5 Frank Glenn from Texas of 1310 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 22nd, 1945. He was 31 years old.

PVT Jessie Goode from North Carolina of 3556 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 7th, 1945. He was 22 years old.

PFC Levester Goodman from North Carolina of 3193 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 16th, 1944. He was 24 years old.

TEC 5 Ross Graham from South Carolina of 3138 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 29th, 1944. He was 23 years old.

TEC 5 Tom Griggs from Ohio of 3682 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 24th, 1944.

TEC 5 Thomas Hammonds from North Carolina of 392 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 30th, 1944. He was 31 years old.

SGT Alex Hansboro from Texas of 434 PORT CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on January 21st, 1945. He was 22 years old.

PVT John H. Harris from the District of Columbia of 1323 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 20th, 1944. He was 30 years old.

PVT Roberta Hawkins from Texas of 3869 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 9th, 1945. He was 23 years old.

CPL Charlie L. Herndon from Kentucky of 4083 QM V CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 12th, 1944. He was 23 years old.

PVT William Hester from Arkansas of 306 RHD CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 10th, 1944.

CPL Jimmie Hicks from Georgia of 1323 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 6th, 1944. He was 22 years old.

TEC 5 Roy Hill from Oklahoma of 483 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on February 3rd, 1945.

PFC Horace Horton from North Carolina of 499 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 3rd, 1945. He was 30 years old.

PVT Harrison Hubbard from Arkansas of 3867 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 4th, 1944.

PVT George Jackson from Ohio of 624 PORT CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on January 23rd, 1945. He was 29 years old.

CPL Jinse C. Jackson from Kentucky of 549 ENGR L PON CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 8th, 1945. He was 27 years old.

PVT Pete L. Jarber from Kentucky of 74 CML GENERATOR CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on December 2nd, 1944. He was 21 years old.

1 SGT Gelain J. Jefferson from Pennsylvania of 4335 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 14th, 1945. He was 22 years old.

PFC Henry Jefferson from Louisiana of 988th QM Service Co served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 20th, 1944. He was 28 years old.

PVT James H. Jeffries from Pennsylvania of 509 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 23rd, 1945. He was 20 years old.

TEC 5 Albert Jenkins from New Jersey of 485 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 30th, 1944.

PVT William H. Johnson from Virginia of 306 RHD CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 7th, 1944. He was 22 years old.

TEC 5 John T. Jones from Virginia of 502 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 19th, 1944. He was 21 years old.

SGT Melvin Jones from Georgia of 364 ENGR REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 8th, 1944. He was 22 years old.

PFC Leroy Kelly from North Carolina of 516 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 24th, 1945. He was 24 years old.

PVT Selmer Kendrick from Indiana of 4083 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 12th, 1944. He was 23 years old.

M SGTJames W. Kersh from Tennessee of 364 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 11th, 1944.

PVT Nollie J. Lewis from Texas of 317 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 7th, 1945. He was 34 years old.

PVT Edmon T. Littleton from Alabama of 131 QM BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 30th, 1945. He was 23 years old.

PVT Lindsay Lyles from Alabama of 511 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 4th, 1945. He was 21 years old.

CPL Lloyd A. Martin from Pennsylvania of 236 QM BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 5th, 1944. He was 32 years old.

2 LT Eddie L. May from Wisconsin of 1349 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 26th, 1945.

PFC Earl W. Mayes from Florida of 501 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 31st, 1945. He was 23 years old.

PFC Vincent A. Mayo from New York of 4059 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 26th, 1945. He was 26 years old.

TEC 4 Oscar L. Middlebrook from Tennessee of 513 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 7th, 1945. He was 21 years old.

PFC Raymond T. Moore from Virginia of 1310 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 21st, 1944. He was 20 years old.

PVT James E. Myers from Virginia of 3692 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on December 16th, 1944. He was 26 years old.

PVT Chester Nash from Tennessee of 505 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 8th, 1945. He was 26 years old.

TEC 5 Samuel G. Nathaniel from South Carolina of 3132 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 5th, 1945. He was 35 years old.

PFC George M. Parker from Pennsylvania of 1323 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 9th, 1944. He was 35 years old.

PVT Lawrence Payton from Lousiana of 388 ENGR REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 18th, 1945. He was 31 years old.

SSGT Hiawatha L. E. Perry from Tennessee of 652 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on October 19th, 1944. He was 34 years old.

PVT John D. Phillips from Pennsylvania of 502 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 29th, 1945. He was 21 years old.

PVT James H. Pickens from Pennsylvania of 511 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 19th, 1945.

PFC William A. Platt from North Carolina of 388 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on February 7th, 1945. He was 30 years old.

TEC 5 Ernest R. Potts from Oklahoma of 3497 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 11th, 1945. He was 25 years old.

SGT Curry Purser from Georgia of 389 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 6th, 1944.

TEC 5 Mack Roby from Mississippi of 514 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 15th, 1944. He was 22 years old.

PFC Jesse Rose from Illinois of 1432 Labor Sup Co served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 20th, 1945. He was 30 years old.

PFC Paul L. Russell from Illinois of 3219 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 11th, 1945.

PFC William L. Ryerson from New York of 364 ENGR REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 7th, 1944. He was 24 years old.

TEC 5 Booker T. Saddler from Mississippi of 516 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 21st, 1945. He was 26 years old,

PFC Orin D. Saddler from New York of 485 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on May 11th, 1945. He was 39 years old.

PVT Logan S. Scott from Georgia of 951 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 18th, 1944.

PVT John H. Showes from Ohio of 954 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on November 19th, 1944. He was 39 years old.

CK3C Malcolm Slaughter from Mississippi of USNR served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 9th, 1944.

PFC Charles C. Smith from Missouri of 4371 QM BAKERY CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on January 1st, 1945. He was 32 years old.

PFC Frank W. Smith from South Carolina of 1697 ENGR COMBAT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 16th, 1945. He was 25 years old.

PVT Albert Suber from Michigan of 1323 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 21st, 1944.

TEC 5 Rufus Sykes from Virginia of 549 ENGR L PON CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 16th, 1945. He was 25 years old.

PFC Luther J. Thompson from Michigan of 521 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on April 7th, 1945.

PVT Vandyke S. Toye from Virginia of 388 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 10th, 1945. He was 27 years old.

PVT Alexander Troop from Indiana of 165 CML GENERATOR CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 25th, 1945. He was 35 years old.

PVT James Tucker from North Carolina of 973 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 19th, 1945. He was 25 years old.

CPL Ernest J. Walker from Illinois of 4058 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 28th, 1944. He was 28 years old.

CPL General U. Walker from Florida of 364 ENGR GEN SV REGT served his country honorably during WWII and died on July 7th, 1944. He was 25 years old.

PVT David Webster from New Jersey of 3871 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on June 15th, 1945. He was 39 years old.

TEC 5 Willie R. Weston from Pennsylvania of 663 QM TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on September 18th, 1944. He was 20 years old.

TEC 5 Albert B. Williams from Georgia of 470 TRK CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on August 20th, 1944. He was 23 years old.

PVT J. S. Willis from Missouri of 450 GAS SUP CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on December 27th, 1944. He was 22 years old.

PVT William A. Wilson from Illinois of 485 PORT BN served his country honorably during WWII and died on March 31st, 1945.

PFC Clifford Woods from Tennessee of 4057 QM SV CO served his country honorably during WWII and died on December 28th, 1944. He was 39 years old.

NAMES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN BURIED AT NORMANDY AMERICAN CEMETERY (NAC)

6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was an all-women, all-black unit which processed mail in Europe during WWII. While women were not allowed In combat, PFC Mary H. Bankston and PFC Mary J. Barlow were killed in an auto vehicle accident on July 8, 1945 and SGT Dolores M. Browne from Connecticut died later from injuries on July 13, 1945.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN MISSING IN ACTION

These men remain missing in action today. They are memorialized on the Wall of the Missing at the Normandy American Cemetery (NAC).

TEC 5 Resse G. Boone from North Carolina of the 514 PORT BN.

PFC Sylvester D. Haggins from New York of the 364 ENGR GEN SV REGT.

TSGT Raymond Heads from Texas of the 3688 QM TRK CO. He was decorated with a Purple Heart.

PFC Mack Homer from Georgia of the 364 ENGR GEN SV REGT.

TEC 5 Daniel Wyatt from Louisiana of the 364 ENGR GEN SV REGT.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, every year when we celebrate and reflect on Black History Month, we learn the stories of some of America's greatest scientists, actors, writers, entertainers, scholars, workers, and ordinary people who made major contributions to this great country.

As a member of the Military Construction, Veteran Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, I want to share the unsung stories of the valiant Black men and women who served their country dutifully during World War II even in the face of adversity.

We know about the brave Tuskegee Airmen—Red Tails—who flew fighter and bomber planes during World War II, but many do not know that the Red Tails were only a few of the nearly 1 million African Americans who served during the war. These courageous men and women fought bravely to protect the democratic ideals of freedom and equality.

Sadly, the country they served did not live up to those ideals. When they returned from victory in Europe and the Pacific, many did not receive a hero's welcome because of the color of their skin.

My dad, the late Lieutenant Colonel Garvin Tutt, was one of those heroes. He served in the 92nd Battalion in Italy supporting the Normandy invasion, was in World War II, the Korean war, and served in the Army for 25 years.

Only recently have the contributions of African-American men and women during World War II been recognized as our country has attempted to acknowledge its sad and dark past. That is why I am taking time on the floor today to honor the 138 African-American men and women buried in Normandy American Cemetery and the 5 men who remain missing. It is my hope that, by sharing these stories today and entering their names into the RECORD, more people will come to appreciate the sacrifices of these brave men and women who served this country with distinction during World War II.

Now, most people know that on June 6, 1944, approximately 2,000 soldiers landed on the beaches of Normandy for what would be a major turning point in the war, but far fewer know that the all-Black 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion served with distinction during the D-day invasions. The 320th was the only Black unit to take part on D-day and the only balloon battalion dedicated to protecting troops from intense German aircraft attacks on Omaha and Utah beaches. This was unique because Black units were usually kept from combat and fulfilled essential support services instead.

As part of their mission to protect Allied troops, the men of the 320th implemented innovative ideas to ease transportation to shore of barrage balloons that weighed half a ton. In addition to defending American soldiers during D-day invasions, the battalion also secured its own successful offensive strikes. The battalion's ingenuity and service was later recognized as an important element of the air defense team by Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was Supreme Allied Commander General at the time.

Sadly, no sacrifice comes without the loss of human life. During the D-day invasion, the 320th suffered two casualties. Corporal Brooks Stith and Corporal Henry J. Harris from the 320th are both buried at the Normandy American Cemetery. Each of these men was decorated with the Purple Heart, the American Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal for their valiant service. There is James M. McLean of the 320th, who died on July 16, 1944. He was also buried at the cemetery.

African Americans who were buried at the cemetery, the men from the 320th, were buried with their White peers. Even though units were segregated until President Harry Truman changed official Department of Defense policies in 1948, Black and White soldiers who died in Normandy were buried together. At the Normandy American Cemetery, 135 African-American men and 3 African-American women were laid to rest from 1944 to 1945.

Mr. Speaker, there are five Black men who remain missing in action while posted in Normandy. They are honored on the Walls of the Missing at Normandy with more than 1,700 others.

While women were not allowed in combat during World War II, three Black women from the 6888th Postal Directory Battalion of the Women's Army Corps are also buried at the cemetery. They were killed during an accident with a jeep.

Now, this was an all-women, all-Black unit that helped process mail in Europe during World War II. They were the first Black battalion deployed after First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and civil rights leader Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune advocated for Black women to join the Women's Army Corps, the WAC, for nearly a year and a half. The women received basic training and were trained in jujitsu because they were not allowed to carry firearms. They successfully helped clear massive mail backlogs in various cities across Europe.

While the women of the 6888th were celebrated for their work in Europe, some historians speculate that inspectors would sometimes give unsatisfactory reviews because of their prejudices.

Unit commander Major Charity Adams was court-martialed once for pushing back when a general threatened to send a "white first lieutenant" to show her how to command her unit.

We are indebted to these women for their exemplary work processing mail efficiently to

keep up the morale of our troops during WWII. But more importantly, we owe them the respect they never received.

Mr. Speaker, these men and women lost their lives too soon for a country that hasn't done a great job of remembering their bravery and their sacrifices.

An analysis conducted by the Army showed that the average age of African American service members buried at the NAC is 27 years—the prime age when a young person is starting their life.

That is why it is so important for us to remember and tell their stories during Black History Month.

As Black History Month continues, I hope my colleagues will consider joining me in honoring their memories by also speaking on the Floor about other all-Black battalions who fought during WWII.

As the daughter of a WWII and Korean Veteran, I am very honored to be on the Military-Veterans Appropriations Subcommittee to ensure our veterans receive the care and recognition they deserve.

Let me close by thanking our Military-Veterans Chair, Congressman CHARLIE DENT and then Ranking Member SANFORD BISHOP and then full Committee Chair ROGERS and Ranking Member LOWEY, for their support in the Appropriations Committee and the commission for helping bring these great heroes and sheros to the attention of the American people and by properly recognizing their sacrifices and their legacies.

Hopefully this effort will help us locate their descendants and families to and thank them and honor them as part of yes—Black History but of course this is American History that all Americans should recognize and learn from.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chair of our subcommittee, Mr. DENT, Ranking Member LOWEY, Mr. BISHOP, and you, Mr. ROGERS, for your support in the Appropriations Committee and for the American Battle Monuments Commission's very dedicated work in helping us bring these great heroes and sheroes to the attention of the American people by properly recognizing their sacrifices and their legacies.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

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

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

The Psalmist cannot find enough words to express trust in You. Personal experience of Your presence, care, and abiding guidance gives rise to his song: ''O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, the fullness of my salvation, my stronghold.''

Stir in our hearts today Your Holy Spirit. Touch the soul of this Nation, that we may see Your saving work in our work, Your strength behind our weakness, Your purpose in our efforts at laws of justice, Your peace drawing all of us and the world to lasting freedom.

You are ever faithful, O Lord, worthy of all our trust. May all that is done in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE 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.

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
February 16, 2017.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: This letter is to inform you, in your role as Speaker, that I have today sent a letter to my Governor resigning my seat in Congress. A duplicate of that letter is attached.

I am truly honored that President Trump has given me the opportunity to lead the Office of Management and Budget. The opportunity to work with such a talented and intelligent group of people—in an effort to try to restore our country's fiscal security—was too good to pass up. It does, however, come at the price of leaving the House.

I am thankful for the efforts you made on my behalf in this effort. I am thankful for the leadership you have shown during my time in the House. But, more than all of that, I am thankful for your friendship over the last six years. Working with you—as a Chairman and the Speaker—will forever be one of the highlights of my career.

I sincerely hope my resignation is not the end of that relationship. Indeed, I choose to see it as simply the next chapter of our mutual effort to try to serve the nation.

All the best. Thanks again. And God Bless.

Sincerely,

MICK MULVANEY.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2017.

Hon. HENRY MCMASTER,
Governor, State of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

DEAR GOVERNOR MCMASTER: Earlier today I was confirmed by the United States Senate to serve as President Trump's Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Assuming this office requires me to resign my position as the United States Representative for the 5th Congressional District of South Carolina.

It has been a great honor and personal privilege to represent the people of South Carolina in Congress. The people of my district, and of our state, are some of the nicest, hardest working people I've ever met. They care deeply about our state and our nation, and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to have been able to serve them.

However, the opportunity to work directly with the President in his Cabinet to shape our nation's budget and ensure financial stability for generations to come is a call to service I simply cannot ignore. I am truly honored that President Trump has given me this opportunity.

So, in hopes that I can better serve our nation, the President, the people of the 5th Congressional District, and the state of South Carolina, I hereby tender my resignation as United States Representative, effective immediately.

Thank you for your service to our state and your continued friendship.

Respectfully,

MICK MULVANEY,
Member of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY), the whole number of the House is 431.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF GARY PETERSEN

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of my dear friend, and fellow WSU alumnus, Mr. Gary Petersen.

Following his graduation in 1965, Gary began a distinguished career on behalf of our country and notable Washington institutions, such as the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Hanford, Energy Northwest, the State Department, and, recently, as vice president of the Tri-City Development Council.

For 5 decades, Gary has been a devoted advocate for the Tri-Cities, and his efforts have been critical to the area's growth and development. He is also an unwavering proponent of PNNL and the defense nuclear waste cleanup mission at Hanford. In Congress, Gary has provided me with critical counsel, while generously serving on my Hanford Working Group.

His integrity and distinguished career were recognized with his 2013 induction into WSU's Murrow Alumni Hall of Achievement.

I am honored to call Gary a friend, and will be forever grateful for his patriotism and dedicated service to the Tri-Cities and our great Nation.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BOB OLIVER

(Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I have the personal pleasure and honor of saying a few words about a leader in our community who has dedicated his life to the betterment of others.

Bob Oliver is the president and CEO of Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc., which is a healthcare company based in my district in Princeton, New Jersey. Bob's strategic leadership over the last 7 years has been instrumental in developing a diverse portfolio of marketed products, specifically focusing on neuroscience, cardio-renal, and oncology. He is personally passionate about helping others and those who care for them.

He has worked for over 40 years helping others navigate the healthcare system more easily and has publicly addressed mental health stigma, disparity in healthcare treatment, and the future of health care using technology advancements. He has worked closely with local advocacy groups to aid veterans and other individuals struggling with homelessness, mental illness, addiction, and poverty.

In addition to being a community partner, through his leadership role at Otsuka, he has been instrumental in driving economic growth in the pharmaceutical sector, as well as creating job opportunities in my State.

Most recently, he was featured as one of Ebony Magazine's Power 100, an esteemed panelist with CNN's Fareed Zakaria, and a featured leader in Forbes Magazine. The journey is just beginning as he closes this chapter in Otsuka and proceeds to move forward in his life.

He has made us very proud. We are proud to take this moment to address his accomplishments and to thank him for his lifetime of achievement. We wish him the best of luck and Godspeed.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF BILL COOPER

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

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the life of Bill Cooper. Bill was a leader, innovator, philanthropist, and a friend, and he lived the American Dream.

He grew up in Detroit, where he worked as a police officer while earning a degree in accounting. His career in banking brought him to Minnesota in 1985, when he became CEO of Twin Cities Federal. He transformed this small savings and loan into a thriving national bank.

Bill worked to ensure that all children also had access to a quality education by founding the Friends of Education, which sponsors 15 schools and serves more than 9,000 children.

Bill was a defining force as well in Minnesota politics. He always stood up for conservative principles and served as chairman of the State Republican Party from 1997 to 1999.

Bill Cooper left his mark on Minnesota, and he will be deeply missed by all of us who knew him.

ALL PERPETRATORS OF CHILD ABUSE MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

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

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing important legislation to ensure that all perpetrators of child abuse are held accountable. It closes a Federal loophole that wrongly denies justice for some survivors, like Penny Saum from Washington State.

Last month, I heard from Penny directly about the horrific abuses she faced at the hands of her father. He was convicted, sentenced to prison, and ordered to pay $5 million in damages. But because he is a military retiree, Federal law has shielded him from paying a cent of the restitution that he owes. It is unacceptable.

Congress already passed a law in 1994, holding Federal retirees accountable for abusing a child. Now it is our responsibility to apply the same standard to all perpetrators.

I am honored to be working with my colleague from Washington State, Congresswoman HERRERA BEUTLER, to close this heartbreaking loophole. In these challenging times, this is exactly the kind of bipartisan solution we can all work together on.

RARE DISEASES ARE NOT A RARE PROBLEM

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the 30 million Americans affected by a rare disease. An astounding 95 percent of rare diseases have no approved treatments or cures. My bill, the OPEN Act, seeks to change that.

The OPEN Act provides incentives for drug makers to repurpose major market treatments for rare disease patients. It could open the door for a surge in biotechnology jobs and investment. Most importantly, the OPEN Act would help make sure those suffering from a rare condition can finally find safe, effective, affordable medication.

I was inspired to write the OPEN Act after meeting with folks who live with rare diseases, like Ashleigh Pike, Candace Lerman, and Kelly Freeman from Florida. The ideas that shaped this legislation came from those who it will help most, rare disease patients. After all, rare diseases are not a rare problem.

The OPEN Act has the potential to bring hope to millions of patients and their families.

NEW MARKET TAX CREDITS

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the new market tax credits have helped inject new economic viability into my western New York community. The program continues to help revitalize economically distressed cities throughout America; in western New York, more than $300 million in private investment in the past decade that would not have occurred without the tax credit program.

Historically and architecturally significant buildings like the Electric Tower and Asbury Hall in downtown Buffalo are buzzing with new residential and commercial life. Most recently, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the Nation's first cancer center, opened their new clinical sciences building with the help of the new market tax credit program.

I urge my colleagues to support my legislation to make the new market tax credits permanent.

OBAMACARE IS FAILING PATIENTS

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, many of us have come here to the floor to share with the country and our colleagues statistics and data demonstrating how ObamaCare is failing patients. We have shown the numbers related to skyrocketing premiums and deductibles and reduction of patient choice.

Today, I want to share what my constituents are saying about their firsthand experiences with ObamaCare. From comments we have received:

My deductible went from $250 to $2,500.

Our deductible skyrocketed to double the amount we were paying. Plus, it provided fewer options.

Our premiums have skyrocketed. We had few options from plans. We had to switch doctors.

We own a pharmacy. We see many with high premiums who can't afford the very things they need.

Cost of insurance keeps going up. It has never gone down.

I don't have insurance. It is too expensive, and I have kids to feed.

Mr. Speaker, the status quo under ObamaCare is unacceptable. It would be irresponsible and unethical not to act.

Our plan, House Republicans, will bring families relief by repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act with reforms that lower costs and expand access to quality affordable health care to all of our citizens.

□ 1215

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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

Ms. ADAMS. As an African-American woman and a Member of Congress, I know I stand on the shoulders of giants.

My election would not have been possible without the efforts of Maya Angelou, Shirley Chisholm, Fannie Lou Hamer, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks, and many other sheroes who came before me. These women championed civil rights and women's rights and fought oppression so that African-American women could have a voice in politics.

When I was elected, I became the 100th woman to serve in the 114th Congress, the 20th woman in the Congressional Black Caucus, and only the second African-American woman to represent North Carolina in Congress. That night was a historic win for women, but it was particularly special for African-American women.

Shirley Chisholm once said: ''Women must become revolutionary. There cannot be evolution but revolution.''

At a time when the President's Cabinet does not include a single African-American woman and just one African-American woman in the Senate, we are reminded that there is still much work to do.

If this administration will not make a place for us, we will make one for ourselves. It is time to stand up, speak up, and make our voices heard.

MOMENT OF SILENCE HONORING QUENTIN MOSES

(Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Quentin Moses, a 10th District native, a star athlete, and a dedicated coach who tragically passed away in a house fire this past Sunday morning.

I pray and grieve for the family and friends of Quentin, as well as the family of Andria Godard and her daughter, Jasmine, who also lost their lives.

Mr. Speaker, Quentin Moses grew up in my home district in Athens, Georgia. He attended Cedar Shoals High School, starting his career as a defensive standout. He went on to play for the University of Georgia, was named first-team All-SEC on the Bulldogs' 2005 SEC Championship team. Following that, he spent 4 years in the NFL as a linebacker. He returned to our community in 2012, where he started coaching student-athletes at Reinhardt University in Waleska, Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, Quentin's positive impact on the community was evident by the outpouring of love and condolences by coaches, players, and fans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to rise and join me for a moment of silence to honor the lives of Quentin Moses and Andria and Jasmine Godard—precious lives lost too soon.

GENERAL FLYNN

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

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, this week, after news came out that General Flynn lied to the people and even to the Vice President, Donald Trump was forced to fire yet another adviser because of their inappropriate ties to Russia.

That brings the total since he first launched his campaign to at least three. This includes former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, who resigned after secret records showed he worked with, and profited from, the corrupt pro-Russian Government in Ukraine before it was ousted.

As we suspected, it turns out that Trump's campaign was in near constant contact with Russia.

Now we ask the questions: Why? Did Trump know? How will these secret talks influence our foreign policy?

We deserve answers. Republicans have said that they don't want to politicize this, and I agree. That is why I support an independent investigation conducted by experts who will provide a more public report.

We have a responsibility to the people to unearth the truth.

OPIOID ABUSE EPIDEMIC

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

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the opioid abuse epidemic continues to worsen across this country.

In Florida alone, heroin and fentanyl deaths have risen by nearly 80 percent. Local governments in Florida are responding as best they can with their limited resources, but they cannot solve the problem alone. The 18th District of Florida includes parts of Palm Beach County, where my colleague, LOIS FRANKEL, resides, which is one of the hardest hit counties in the State. In 2016, the county received more than 4,000 overdose calls, and there were approximately 500 opioid-related deaths.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's veterans are uniquely vulnerable to this crisis. We must never forget our responsibility to these brave men and women to ensure that, when they leave the battlefield overseas, they aren't left to fight their personal battles here at home all alone.

I commend Congress for passing legislation last year to combat this epidemic, but we have to do more. I urge my colleagues to pass the bipartisan STOP Act to crack down on illicit opioid shipments into the U.S., and I also hope that we can continue to work together in other ways to fight this epidemic.

Only by working together at the Federal, State, and local government levels can we defeat this terrible scourge that is creating new tragedies daily.

WE MUST HAVE AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION

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

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Russia is an alarming force in the world, a nuclear power with an authoritarian President, menacing our European allies with invasion into Ukraine and threats of incursion into other Baltic states, lifting mass murderer Assad in Syria, interfering in democratic elections around the world and here in our country, and now evidence is mounting that the White House-Putin connections run deep.

Michael Flynn's shady dealings and lies to the Vice President and the public—what did the President know? When did he know it?

Answers to these and other questions are critical to our national security. We must have an independent investigation. The American people deserve nothing less.

DUCKS UNLIMITED'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

(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 congratulate Ducks Unlimited on its 80th anniversary. Over the past eight decades, Ducks Unlimited has partnered with local communities and Members of Congress to support conservation of millions of acres of waterfowl habitats across North America.

As a lifelong outdoorsman, I know the value of these habitats and the benefits that they provide to countless Americans who enjoy these areas for a wide array of recreational and scientific activities.

We must ensure the preservation of these habitats for future generations, and I know that Ducks Unlimited will work to ensure this goal for another 80 years.

I would like to extend my thanks and congratulations to DU and wish them continued success for many generations to come.

HONORING MARK HAWKINS

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and congratulate Mark Hawkins, who will retire tomorrow after 29 years as chief executive officer of Altura Credit Union in Riverside, California.

After nearly three decades, Mark's greatest contribution is likely not to the credit union, which grew significantly under his leadership, but to the members of our community who have benefited so much from his commitment to supporting the Inland Empire.

Whether it is academia, athletics, the arts, or charitable organizations, Mark has been a fixture in promoting the institutions that define and enrich our community. His work with organizations, including the United Way, the Kiwanis Club, and the University of California-Riverside, has strengthened our community and expanded opportunities to thousands of Inland Empire residents. I know he will continue that work for many years to come.

Once again, I congratulate Mark on his well-earned retirement, and I thank him for his continued service to our community.

CONGRATULATING QUINCY NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

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

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Quincy Notre Dame High School on 150 years of academic excellence and service to the community of Quincy, Illinois.

Quincy Notre Dame Catholic High School originally opened as a school serving young women. Mother Caroline and the school sisters of Notre Dame answered the call to meet the growing need for primary studies in 1859. The school opened its doors in 1867 and quickly exploded in growth.

Throughout the past 150 years, Quincy Notre Dame has always sought to serve the needs of the Quincy community and adapt to the changing times.

QND remains steadfast in its mission to educate lifelong learners in a strong faith-based environment. I am certain that Mother Caroline and her Sisters would be humbled to know their simple act of faith and service resulted in a legacy that has impacted thousands of lives for 150 years.

To each educator, administrator, and individual who has helped build Quincy Notre Dame into the stellar institution it is today, congratulations. I wish you another successful 150 years.

GENERAL FLYNN, PRESIDENT TRUMP, AND RUSSIA

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

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, the question that I have heard many times from my constituents deserves to be answered: With respect to General Flynn and Trump campaign aides, what did President Trump know, and when did he know it?

How high does this go up?

Now he is calling this fake news.

Mr. President, this is not fake news. This is real.

The American people deserve a transparent, independent investigation into Russia's involvement with the White House and President Trump.

President Trump continually says he wants to protect our national security, but he ignores the real security threats within his administration.

Even my colleagues across the aisle would rather focus on taking away health care from millions of Americans and thousands of Nevadans instead of investigating the clear and present danger in the Trump administration.

Enough is enough. Protecting our national security is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. It is an American priority.

GENERAL FLYNN, PRESIDENT TRUMP, AND RUSSIA

(Miss RICE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, Michael Flynn's resignation and reports of constant contact between Russia and the Trump campaign raise serious questions, and the American people deserve answers.

President Trump was informed weeks ago that Flynn lied about his discussions with the Russian Ambassador and might be vulnerable to blackmail.

Why did the President take no action until that lie became public?

President Trump has reportedly been briefed about contact between his campaign and Russian intelligence officers.

Why does he continue to insist that there was absolutely no communication with Russia?

These questions cannot go unanswered. We need to put politics aside, do what is right for our democracy, and create an independent commission to fully investigate Russia's influence on the Trump administration and the Presidential election.

GENERAL FLYNN'S RUSSIAN CONNECTION

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

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to echo concerns by my colleagues. I am concerned, but not surprised, about the growing revelations from the intelligence community of the Trump campaign's contact with Russian officials. Russia's involvement in our elections undermines American democracy.

General Flynn's resignation is no substitute for answers to grave concerns and questions over President Trump's involvement in secret communications with the Russians and Vladimir Putin's hand in our elections.

I believe that this is just the tip of the iceberg. This is not just about leakers, but this is about the Trump-Russia ties. We need a full, bipartisan investigation. It is our duty.

TRUMP'S MUSLIM BAN AND TOWN HALL IN THE DISTRICT

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I hosted a community listening session where my fellow citizens and I listened to the personal experiences of Muslims, refugees, and other immigrants in the aftermath of the President's Muslim/immigrant ban and ICE dragnet crackdown on Latinos.

It was a safe place for Muslims, refugees, and immigrants to come and share their experiences, values, and love for this country, and it provided an opportunity for us to embrace our fellow citizens in love. We insist that these valuable members of our community and their children be able to live without fear, and to thrive.

Unlike the Muslim/immigrant ban, the people of Georgia's Fourth Congressional District welcomed those of all backgrounds and religions and those fleeing persecution and facing war and bloodshed.

Trump's immigration executive order is contrary to our values and dangerous to our security. Americans who respect the Constitution must oppose these kinds of acts, the injustice they represent, and the suffering that they impose upon the innocent.

□ 1230

RECOGNIZING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Prince George's County Public Schools for achieving a record high school graduation rate. Prince George's schools are living up to their motto of being Great By Choice.

Eight schools have met the goal of graduating 90 percent of seniors within 4 years, including three schools in the Fourth Congressional District: Charles Herbert Flowers High School, DuVal High School, and the Academy of Health Sciences at Prince George's Community College.

Many schools in the Fourth District, including Suitland, Potomac, and Forestville high schools have demonstrated real progress, with graduation rate gains of more than 4 percentage points.

Mr. Speaker, these gains have been made possible by the incredible dedication of educators and parents who are focused on policies that improve student success like expanding mentoring programs, effectively using data to target student needs, and emphasizing core reading and math skills.

Mr. Speaker, we must prepare students for successful lives and careers once they graduate from high school. That is why I am committed to working during this Congress to ensure every student has access to rigorous, relevant, and results-driven career technology education programs to equip them with the skills to succeed in the 21st century.

STRANGER THINGS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, like the main characters in ''Stranger Things,'' we are now stuck in the ''Upside Down.'' Right is wrong. Up is down. Black is white.

The White House deceives the American public for weeks about their contacts with Russia, but an Attorney General who followed her conscience is fired.

Executive orders are signed to ban Muslims in order to keep us safe, while top secret national security conversations are held out in the open.

President Trump showers praise on a thug like Vladimir Putin, while threatening and bullying our longstanding allies.

President Trump signs an executive order to spend $20 billion on a border wall, while Flint, Michigan, still goes without clean drinking water.

Mr. Speaker, mornings might be for coffee and contemplation, but Chief Jim Hopper is not coming to rescue us. This is not a TV show. This is real life. We have a President unlike any we have ever known. And like Mike, Dustin, Lucas, and Eleven, we must remain focused on the task at hand and hold this administration accountable so we can escape from our own version of the ''Upside Down.''

INTEGRITY

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, the United States of America is known for many things. It is known for its integrity, its honesty, and its high moral compass.

We are well aware that the United States intelligence community is united in its assessment that Russia attacked our Nation in 2016, and interfered in our elections. In response, President Obama imposed sanctions on the Russian Government and personnel entities, including intelligence services. He also expelled dozens of Russian officials from the United States. Now, we know that General Flynn, in violation of many laws, intruded and discussed these issues with the Russian Ambassador.

His departure does not end this investigation. Who knew what, when? When did the President know it? The integrity of this country is higher and more superior than one individual.

Why, when other Presidents have used Camp David and the White House for international diplomacy most often, did we have, over the past weekend, the embarrassment of international and national security issues, and personnel being filmed in an ordinary restaurant owned by the President?

Finally, let me say, with the many hundreds of thousands of DACA children who need relief, the question is: Can the President attend to serious business fighting for these young people and saving lives?

WE DESERVE TO KNOW

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

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, we live in a dangerous world, and the President needs a National Security Adviser who isn't under a cloud of suspicion. But this resignation isn't the end. Americans now deserve to know if General Flynn was operating under anyone else's authority.

The American people deserve to know if Russia has financial, personal, or political grip on President Trump or his campaign. I am urging the agencies involved in the investigation to continue their important work vigorously.

I also ask my colleagues in House leadership to launch a bipartisan, independent congressional investigation into Russia's influence on the election and the new administration.

Lastly, I once again am calling on President Trump to remove his cheap political strategist, Steve Bannon, from the National Security Council and reinstate the Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to restore some semblance of respectability to the organization's structure.

RESIGNATIONS AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY AND COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALMER) laid before the House the following resignations as a member of the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Education and the Workforce:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2017.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Due to my election to the Committee on Ways and Means, this letter is to inform you that I resign my seats on the House Judiciary committee and the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL D. BISHOP.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignations are accepted.

There was no objection.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 131

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Smith of Missouri, to rank immediately after Mr. Johnson of Ohio.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE: Mr. Russell, to rank immediately after Mr. Grothman.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS: Mr. Bishop of Michigan.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF FINAL RULE OF DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 123, I

call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 69) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to ''Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska'', and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 123, the joint resolution is considered read.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 69

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to ''Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska'' (81 Fed. Reg. 52247 (August 5, 2016)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.J. Res. 69.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the only Member of Congress in the House from Alaska, the dean of the Republican side.

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) for bringing this legislation to the floor.

H.J. Res. 69 is very simple. It overturns an illegal rule by the Obama administration—an illegal rule.

This House created the State of Alaska in 1959, under the Statehood Act. It clearly granted Alaska full authority to manage fish and game on all lands in the State of Alaska, including all Federal lands.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980 further, in fact, verified what the Statehood Act did: protecting the right of the State to manage fish and game.

Mo Udall was chairman of the Interior Committee at that time, and he agreed that this was the right thing to do. The thing that we had to do was make sure there was no misinterpretation of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and the Statehood Act.

What occurred under the Obama administration is that—your administration, on that side—in the wee hours of the night, they passed a rule that took that away from the State. And it is huge, if you think about it: 16 refuges, 76.8 million acres. That is bigger than most of the States in this Union. They took the right away from the State to manage fish and game.

There has been a lot of interest groups and some Members of Congress that have been conveying falsehoods, flat out dishonesty on what the taking back of the management of fish and game will do. They talk about killing puppies and grizzly bears. That does not happen, nor, in fact, is it legal in the State of Alaska under our management.

The opposition will claim there was consultation with the State of Alaska. If that is the case, why did Alaska file suit to overturn this rule? There was no consultation.

Yesterday, I met with most of the leaders of the Alaskan Native community that live in this area in the refuges and around the refuges. Not one of them support the rule passed by the Obama administration.

The other side says they are all for helping the American Indians, the first people, yet they are supporting a rule that is illegal. Illegal. I want to stress that.

This rule passed by the Obama administration is opposed by the total delegation, the Governor, all the elected officials in the State of Alaska, and it is an infringement upon the State of Alaska, and it should be an infringement upon your States.

Maybe we ought to go back to every State in the Union, maybe even Virginia, and see how we might change the right of Virginia when the Federal lands were involved in the State of Alaska.

You stood up in front of this body and held your hand and said: I swear to uphold the Constitution of America and laws pertaining to it. Every one of you took that oath. Every one of you. Yet, you stand on this floor, and some of you will say: Oh, we have to protect the wolf puppies. That is not what this is about. It is about the law. It is the Statehood Act, the right of Alaskans, and the right of Alaska to manage all fish and game.

If you vote against this resolution, you are saying the Congress does not count, nor can we keep our word. We will do whatever is popular at the time. I say: Shame on you. You said you would uphold the Constitution.

Let's pass this legislation that Mr. BISHOP has brought to the floor. Let's turn back that illegal law that they are trying to impose upon the people of Alaska and the American people. If you don't believe in that, then I suggest you resign from the body, because you are not upholding the law that you swore you would do.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Members of this House for their support of the legal aspects of the State of Alaska.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am dismayed to be part of this discussion of H.J. Res. 69.

Day in and day out, we have meaningful debate in committees and the House floor that reflect very real philosophical differences about the responsibilities and the limits of the Federal Government. These differences and world views inevitably reflect differences in values.

Today, I can't understand how my Republican friends can defend values that allow and promote the cruelest possible killing methods.

Humans have hunted for millennia. This hunting traditionally requires patience, skill, cunning and encourage, but not sugar doughnuts, helicopters, gasses, or leg traps.

Today's House joint resolution would overturn this incredibly fair and reasonable U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service regulation that would rightly prohibit controversial and scientifically justified killing methods on 76 million acres of Federal wildlife refuge lands—76 million acres that belong to the American people.

□ 1245

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act authorize—and, in fact, require—the Fish and Wildlife Service to maintain the natural diversity of refuges in Alaska, regardless of State wildlife laws. This includes protecting healthy populations of apex predators like wolves and bears.

So this rule would prohibit the inhumane and indiscriminate killing of keystone species in the national wildlife refuges. This does not interfere with fair chase hunting methods. It doesn't even prevent inhumane and indiscriminate killing on State and private lands.

Anyone voting to support this Congressional Review Act resolution today is tacitly supporting using airplanes and helicopters to scout land and shoot grizzly bears, killing wolves, black bears, coyote mothers and their pups and cubs in dens, actually gassing them, and the trapping of grizzly bears and black bears with steel-jawed leghold traps and wire snares, where they are trapped, bleeding, frightened, slowly dying of thirst and starvation. Statewide polls show that Alaskans strongly support eliminating these cruel and unsporting practices.

Alaska also gains over $2 billion in economic activity for wildlife viewing, which is five times what it earns from hunting. This makes economic sense. It is a huge driver of tourism. Many come to Alaska for the unique opportunity to see bears, wolves, and other keystone species. They are the very ones at risk if we pass this resolution.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution, to oppose these cruel and

inhumane practices. They are not sporting practices, and they violate any understanding of humane values and respect for nature.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his time and his leadership on this issue.

I come to the floor today as the co-chair of the largest bipartisan caucus in the United States Congress: the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus. On behalf of the millions of sportsmen and -women around the country, I say to the Federal Government, enough is enough. We will not be intimidated; we will not be strong-armed; and we will not be silent.

States have enjoyed a cooperative relationship with the Federal Government for years on wildlife management, and this is a disturbing shift that we have seen in the last administration.

Though I come to the floor today in defense of Alaska's management rights of national wildlife refuges, this sets a disturbing precedent for the lower 48 States. It is a disturbingly brazen power grab by the Federal Government against the law, in spite of loud and widespread opposition at the local level.

The rule removes Alaska's authority to manage fish and wildlife for both nonsubsistence and subsistence uses in Federal wildlife. The action by the last administration violated the clear letter of the Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act.

I encourage my colleagues to support what we are doing today and stand in support of the good men and women, the outdoorsmen in the great State of Alaska. I know you have heard from the gentleman from Alaska who has very clearly articulated the position of the people he represents in that great State.

I applaud the chairman. I applaud the action that we are taking today. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS).

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, for the third week in a row, Republicans are back on the floor of the House of Representatives seeking to overturn environmental protections for our Nation's deeply valued public lands, this time attacking wildlife protections for iconic species living in national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

This is not a new issue for me or my constituents. My late husband, Senator Paul Tsongas, helped write the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. He worked on a bipartisan basis with Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska to craft legislation that balanced conservation with responsible economic development for Alaskans, including oil exploration, mining, timber harvesting, and sport hunting.

But he also stated on the Senate floor, back in 1980: ''Nature made the wilderness and wildlife in Alaska majestic during hundreds of thousands of years. Man''—and, I would add, woman—''is challenged merely to respect and preserve that natural majesty.''

He also spoke on the Senate floor about conversations at the dinner table with our then 6-year-old daughter, who asked what her father was doing to protect endangered species. Well, our daughter has grown now, but here we are 37 years later in Congress debating if that bipartisan law crafted with my late husband allows hunters to shoot bear cubs and wolf pups in their den on a national wildlife refuge.

My colleagues are correct that ANILCA, as that law is known, and other Federal laws give the State of Alaska unique privileges and responsibilities to oversee wildlife management on public lands; however, this is not a carte blanche. There has never been a right to set policies on national wildlife refuges that are inconsistent with bedrock environmental laws or ANILCA's mandate to conserve species and habitats in their natural diversity on wildlife refuges.

I fully support the Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to no longer turn a blind eye to harmful practices that are detrimental to nationally significant species and are not rooted in science-based wildlife management practices.

If my colleagues so desperately want to authorize a right to shoot bears from a helicopter in a wildlife refuge, I would be happy to recommend some video games. I hear virtual reality headsets these days make it just like the real thing. I urge a ''no'' vote on this resolution.

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

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA), the ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, today House Republicans are taking a short break from their crusade to make our air and water dirtier so they can now take the time to make it easier to kill bear cubs and wolf pups on our national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

The rule that this resolution seeks to repeal does not infringe upon the State of Alaska's bizarre campaign to destroy wildlife populations on State lands nor does it prohibit the State from conducting scientifically valid predator control measures on refuge lands.

The massive Federal overreach and trampling of states' rights being claimed by the sponsor of this resolution and its supporters is nothing more than the latest statement of alternative facts by Republicans here in Washington. The truth is both the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act authorize—and, in fact, require—the Fish and Wildlife Service to maintain the natural diversity of refuges in Alaska, regardless of State wildlife laws. This includes protecting healthy populations of apex predators like wolves and bears.

Instead, the rule prevents the use of methods that hunters in our own country agree violate the ''fair chase'' ethical standard that separates sports hunting from pleasure killing. I don't hunt, but no hunter that I know would ever think of catching a bear in a steel trap or luring it in with bait and then shooting it or blowing away a mother wolf and her pups in their den. These are the types of practices this rule bans, and it only prohibits them on national wildlife refuge areas that are owned and maintained by the American people, not the State of Alaska. These tactics are not part of any science-based wildlife management strategy, and despite what Trump's new Education Secretary might think, these measures are not necessary to protect schoolchildren from grizzlies.

This resolution is just another piece of the Republican agenda to hand our public lands over to States and private interests as well as a distraction from the things House Republicans aren't doing.

Where is your infrastructure package?

Where is your solution to make technical education and college more affordable?

Where is your plan to combat climate change?

The answer is that they do not exist. So, instead, we are wasting time on yet another Congressional Review Act resolution, standing idly by without putting people to work fixing our roads, bridges, and energy grid; without training Americans to do the job of today's economy, not to mention tomorrow's; and without lifting a finger to protect people, many of whom are our own constituents, from the worst impacts of global warming.

The only difference between Trump and the House Republicans is that he distracts the public to try to move his agenda, and they distract the public to hide the fact that they can't move theirs. I urge you to stop the distractions and vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Federal Lands in our full committee.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, in the dying days of the Obama administration, and over vigorous protests by many wildlife and user groups, not to mention the State of Alaska itself, the National Fish and Wildlife Service imposed the rule that Congressman YOUNG's resolution overturns. In violation of the Alaska Statehood Act, the

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, the Fish and Wildlife Service removed Alaska's authority to manage the fish and wildlife populations within its own borders on 76 million acres. That is a land area larger than 45 States.

As part of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, the State agreed to several national wildlife refuges within its borders. In exchange for the Federal Government assuming control of these lands, Alaska was given explicit authority to manage its wildlife populations. This new agency rule breaks this promise. It begins a dangerous process of seizing control of fish and game management decisions which have by right, by law, and by custom belonged to the States.

The North American model of wildlife conservation has been a huge success and has sustained healthy wildlife populations for many generations. Not only is the Fish and Wildlife Service rule illegal, it threatens to reverse these successful land management relationships; it places severe restrictions on the public's right to hunt and fish on these public lands; it interferes with the State's success in managing wildlife populations to assure that they don't overrun the ability of the land to support them; and it shreds the cooperative relationship that Alaska and the Federal Government have enjoyed over these lands since Alaskan statehood.

We have three overarching objectives in the Federal Lands Subcommittee: to restore public access to the public lands, to restore sound management to the public lands, and to restore the Federal Government as a good neighbor to those communities and States impacted by the public lands. In adopting this rule, the agency violated all of these principles.

The Federal Lands Subcommittee will spend this Congress working on legislation to restore our public lands from the policy of benign neglect that has plagued our land management to the point where we are losing entire forests in the West and that has strained the relationships between our communities and our Federal agencies. The resolution sponsored by Congressman YOUNG is an excellent start. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), the former ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what this rule didn't do.

First off, ANILCA did not grant the State of Alaska any additional authority to manage wildlife on Federal lands. This rule is totally compliant with ANILCA. ANILCA actually prioritizes conservation of these species we are talking about here today, apex predators, on more than half the refuges in the State.

As required by ANILCA, the rule ensures that national wildlife refuges—that is what we are talking about here, wildlife refuges—conserve species and habitats in their natural diversity. That doesn't mean you kill the predators so that people who don't have good hunting skills are going to have an easier time getting a caribou or moose. That is not what this is supposed to be about on the national wildlife refuges. It actually prioritizes conservation of these species.

I just heard that something about this will severely restrict hunting and fishing on these lands. Absolutely not true, unless you say shooting wolves and their pups in the den or gassing them in the den is hunting—and we are restricting that.

Bears and cubs would be killed during hibernation, hunters crawling around killing bears during hibernation. No, hunters don't do that.

Brown and black bears would be trapped, snared using steel-jawed traps, wire snares—again, not hunters, not sportsmen.

Luring and baiting grizzly bears? Wow. Now, that is a real sportsmanlike hunter with a lot of skills kind of guy or woman who has to use bait to kill a grizzly bear.

□ 1300

Aerial gunning of bears by State agency personnel, that is hunters? No, not quite.

Sportsmen? No, don't think so.

And using aircraft to track bears and kill in the same day, those are the things that would be prohibited. That is what is prohibited.

Subsistence hunting? Absolutely no impact.

Fishing? Fish? I guess the fishing thing would be the grizzly bears eat the fish, and people who don't have good fishing skills want to catch the fish. So if we kill the grizzly bears, they won't eat the fish. So it does impact fishing, I guess, sort of, maybe. No, it doesn't.

This is absolutely inhumane, unsportsmanlike, and unnecessary. The State of Alaska is doing this just to decrease the natural balance of predation, which actually creates healthier herds of caribou and healthier moose populations.

There was a study done in 2015 by professors from both Alaska and Washington that showed that actually having these predators present increases the health and the diversity of the herds of caribou, because the sick and the lame and the old get killed, but the rest of them flourish and breed. There would be more than enough still to hunt.

Yeah, maybe you won't be able to drive your pickup truck, stick your rifle out of the away, blast away, and get one. You might actually have to get out of the pickup truck. You might actually have to have some hunting skills and track a little bit to get the caribou or the moose.

But if we kill off all of the grizzlies and the wolves, it will be a lot easier. They will overpopulate. Actually, what they will do is they will start going down at the riparian areas, like happened—it is a different ecosystem—in Yellowstone, and then the streams will not be as plentiful with fish.

This is about natural balance, it is about Federal lands, it is about sportsmen and women, and it is about prohibiting the State of Alaska from using its extreme predator control methods. That is what this is called: extreme predator control methods. That is all it prevents.

This is a very sad day in this House if this resolution passes, and it is long-term bad for Alaska.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the vice chairman of the Federal Lands Subcommittee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.J. Res. 69, a bill to use the Congressional Review Act to repeal a rule issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service to restrict hunting within national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

I would like to commend Congressman YOUNG for his leadership on crafting this legislation and for defending his constituents' right to manage the wildlife in their home State.

Mr. Speaker, the assertion that the repeal of this rule would allow unethical management and hunting practices is utterly false. Alaskans have hunted and managed their land for generations, and this overreach by the Fish and Wildlife Service simply impedes their ability to do just that.

Allow me to read from the 2016–2017 Alaska Trapping Regulations, one of many sound management documents usurped by this bureaucratic overreach:

''Wolves and bears are very effective and efficient predators of caribou, moose, deer, and other wildlife. In most of Alaska, humans also rely on the same species for food. In Alaska's Interior, predators kill more than 80 percent of the moose and caribou that die during an average year, while humans kill less than 10 percent. In most of the state, predation holds prey populations at levels far below what could be supported by the habitat in the area. Predation is an important part of the ecosystem, and all . . . wolf management programs, including control programs, are designed to sustain wolf populations in the future.''

Additionally, the regulations go on to say:

''You may not: disturb or destroy beaver houses or any furbearer den.'' Such as wolves, coyote, or mink.

Mr. Speaker, the claim that this bill will allow Alaskans to hunt wolves in their dens is simply false rhetoric, designed to mislead the public, while bureaucrats take away the rights of Alaskans. The people of Alaska rely on these lands to provide for their families, and this Fish and Wildlife rule attempts to insert Washington bureaucrats into that process.

Mr. Speaker, I cringe to think about U.S. Fish and Wildlife usurping established law. I cringe to think about U.S. Fish and Wildlife legislating themselves more power through the rulemaking process. I cringe to think about U.S. Fish and Wildlife expanding the regulations in Alaska, and I sure as heck don't want them expanding them in Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, this is a slippery slope, and I urge my colleagues to rescind this overreach and support this resolution.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, a quick response to the notion that the fears of inhumane practices are utterly false. In a Los Angeles Times story in 2012, the headline is: ''Alaska officials expand aerial shooting of bears.''

It goes on to say:

''The controversial 'intensive management' moves are the latest in a series of increasingly aggressive control methods targeting bears and wolves in Alaska. In some areas, wolf pups can be gassed in their dens, bear cubs and sows can be hunted, and wolves shot from helicopters.''

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, we really should be calling this bill the ''Puppy Killing Act.''

This resolution would overturn a rule that prohibits some of the cruelest hunting practices on Federal lands in Alaska. Now, again, this is not on State land. This is on Federal land that Colorado taxpayers and taxpayers across the country pay for the maintenance of and that we, the people of the country, own.

The Fish and Wildlife rule prohibits so-called predator control activities that Alaska has made legal in State law. As Mr. HUFFMAN said, the Alaska Board of Game specifically voted to allow aerial gunning and snaring of bears. They have engaged in gassing of wolf pups in their dens. These are not theoretical matters. They are actual matters as to why this rule is so important and why I oppose it being overturned.

If this bill passes, the activities that are prevented under this rule for refuges can actually occur.

These cruel and inhumane methods that Alaska wishes to implement, including killing wolf pups and their mothers at or near their dens, killing brown bears with the use of steel-jawed traps, and scouting and shooting grizzly bears from planes and helicopters, are not only unsportsmanlike, but run counter to the directives of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

Thirty-one scientists submitted their support for the Alaska National Refuge Act, noting that the best available science indicates that widespread elimination of bears, coyotes, and wolves will quite unlikely make ungulate herds magically reappear. So, again, the science is clear on this matter.

There was another study by the 1997 National Academy of Sciences that found that Alaska's predator control system, including the assertion of killing wolves and bears, somehow makes other wildlife populations healthier is simply not supported by sound science.

This blunt and unscientific and inhumane approach to managing apex predators and carnivores employed by the State of Alaska is actually counter to the law and the congressional mandate regarding the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which passed overwhelmingly in this body, says it requires the Fish and Wildlife Service to:

> Conserve Fish and Wildlife populations and their habitats in their natural diversity.

How does it protect our carnivore species and the species they consume in their natural diversity if there is artificial and inhumane human intervention to kill puppies and target bears from aircraft?

It is simply unscientific, inhumane, and wrong.

In direct contrast to Federal law, Alaska has adopted regulations that require the killing of wolves and bears under so-called predation control efforts to artificially inflate game populations frequently above and beyond the carrying capacity of the land. The State currently authorizes extreme practices like aerial shooting of wolves or bears by State agency personnel, trapping of wolves by paid contractors, and using airplanes to hunt wolves and bears.

Not only is this bill inhumane and counter to our stewardship of the National Wildlife Refuge, but it is also counterproductive for jobs in the economy of Alaska. Wildlife watching provides roughly five times more the revenue to the Alaskan economy than hunting or trapping. It turns out that the American people and tourists around the world would rather see these puppies and photograph them rather than shoot them and gas them.

According to the Fish and Wildlife records, wildlife viewing activities in Alaska support over $2 billion in economic activity.

Why is Congress spending time trying to allow puppy killing and cruel hunting methods to occur, instead of fair chase methods, especially when this actually undermines Alaska's economy and their ecology of Federal refuges?

Why are we repealing this rule when, in fact, most Alaskans support it?

The American people know there are more pressing issues facing the country than this rule. I urge Members to join me and vote ''no'' on the CRA and protecting puppies.

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

Mr. BEYER. I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. POLIS. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting with the Alaskan people, with the economic interests of Alaska, and with the taxpayers of America, who are stewards of this land, for better wildlife management practices, to stop killing puppies, and engage in inhumane trapping and hunting practices of bears.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR), a member of our committee, who is also going to talk about the reality of what we are facing here.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, on August 5, 2016, the Obama administration published another overreaching regulation that threatens the authority of States nationwide to manage fish and wildlife.

Specifically, the new rule undermines Alaska's authority to manage fish and wildlife on State, private, and Federal lands. The new regulation destroys the cooperative relationship between the State of Alaska and the agency that historically worked well.

This power grab threatens management policies and wildlife refuges nationwide and, if allowed to stand, will set a dangerous precedent for future top-down mandates from the Federal Government that seize authority from States.

The rule violates the Alaska constitution and two laws that were passed by Congress in the form of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and the Alaska Statehood Act. People throughout the country oppose this misguided rule that harms the State of Alaska's authority to manage fish and wildlife within its borders.

In my home State of Arizona, 21 different sportsmen's groups have come out publicly against the rule and endorsed Representative YOUNG's bill to overturn this Washington power grab. The 21 Arizona sportsmen's groups include:

Anglers United; Arizona Flycasters; Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation; Arizona Antelope Foundation, Arizona B.A.S.S. Nation; Arizona Big Game Super Raffle; Arizona Bowhunters Association; Arizona Catfish Conservation Association; Arizona Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation; Arizona Council of Trout Unlimited; Arizona Deer Association; Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society; Arizona Elk Society; Arizona Houndsmen Association; Arizona Outdoor Sports; Coconino Sportsmen; Outdoor Experience for All; Shake Rattle and Troll Outdoors; the Bass Federation-AZ; Xtreme Predator Callers; and 1.2.3.Go.

Representative DON YOUNG's bill is also supported by 27 different sportsmen and conservation groups throughout the country. The National Rifle Association, who is key voting in support of Representative YOUNG's bill, stated:

> The sustainable management of these natural resources needs to be led by the State working in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Fish and Wildlife Service's final rule would set an ill-advised national precedent that could have far-reaching negative implications on the lower 48

States. H.J. Res. 69 will restore the jurisdictional State-Federal relationship as Congress has previously directed.

Americans for Prosperity, who is also key voting in support of H.J. Res. 69, stated:

The Interior rule relating to nonsubsistence take of wildlife, and public participation of closure procedures on national wildlife refuges in Alaska undermines the ability of Alaskans to manage fish and wildlife on refuge lands, which make up more than 20 percent of the State.

Instead, Congress should work with the Trump administration to ensure cooperative Federalism and greater public participation over fish and wildlife management decisions.

I share these concerns and urge rejection of this Obama power grab that undermines Alaska authority to manage fish and wildlife on State, private, and Federal lands. I applaud Representative DON YOUNG for his excellent work and leadership on this issue. He has been remarkably successful over the years of protecting the interests of the people of the State of Alaska. This is yet another classic example of the bureaucratic overreach that Representative YOUNG is working hard to overturn.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game knows best how to manage fish and wildlife in the State of Alaska, not Washington bureaucrats.

I urge adoption of Representative YOUNG's commonsense bill.

□ 1315

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues and my fellow Americans can see what is even greater about this country in its far-reaching wildlife and open areas.

I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 69 because I do think it is important that we be good custodians of what has been given to us. Yes, to protect those humans who have come to be in places where wildlife was, but to be good custodians.

The rule that was adopted years ago after public engagement from many different people is reasonable and rational:

Denning of wolves and their pups, shooting or trapping them while at their dens in the spring; using airplanes to scout land and shoot grizzly bears; trapping of grizzly bears and black bears with steel-jawed leghold traps and wire snares—this is what that rule prevents—luring grizzly bears with rotting meat, sugar, and pet food to get a point-blank kill; denning of black bear mothers and cubs during hibernation.

It reminds me of the time that I came to the floor last year to stand against a horrible killing of Cecil the lion by someone who wanted a trophy.

So let me tell you about the lesson from Dr. Ed Schmitt, a retired surgeon, a hunter, who moved to Alaska from Colorado to fish in the river that flowed by his house, to be able to hunt. He enjoyed fishing for salmon, casting for salmon, and seeing the brown bears, also known as grizzly bears. Here is what he said:

'''Most of us that live in Alaska are here because we recognize that it has something that the rest of the world doesn't,' says Mr. Schmitt, president of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, which is working with the HSUS to protect animals from trophy hunting abuses. 'The wildness can be destroyed by people. We've stopped seeing the wildlife because we've made it go away.'''

He further said: ''It's not true that all Alaskans are OK with the state running rampant on public lands.''

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

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. '''It's not true that all Alaskans are OK with the state running rampant on public lands,' he says. 'Only a minority of Alaskans are hunters, and even fewer kill animals just for a trophy.' ''

This is Dr. Schmitt, a hunter. This is not a tree hugger. He is a hunter who moved to this beautiful land that we can call America. So many Americans on the mainland, in essence, go to this beautiful, connected Alaska, and so Dr. Schmitt goes on to say, like most hunters in Alaska, he is appalled at practices that have been raised up to not save the beauty of these wild animals. '''The notion that people don't want any rules is a myth. We want good rules, just like everybody else.'''

Well, I want to stand alongside of Dr. Ed Schmitt, a healer, a former doctor, a hunter who moved to Alaska, who understands that what we are seeking to disapprove is wrong because it was a reasoned response to all who were engaged in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 69, a congressional resolution rescinding a final rule promulgated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to prevent widely criminalized, cruel, and unsporting hunting methods of killing wolves, grizzly bears, and other native mammals on 76 million acres of federal lands in Alaska.

I oppose the disapproval resolution because it subverts the judgment of professional wildlife managers, and allows appalling methods of killing animals on public lands designated for wildlife.

The FWS rule does not apply to subsistence hunting or sport hunting in general; it simply restricts methods of killing that are not suited anywhere, least of all on national wildlife refuges.

The rule, adopted after years of public engagement and with the support of many Alaskans, bans the following practices:

1. Denning of wolves and their pups—shooting or trapping them while at their dens in the spring;

2. Using airplanes to scout, land and shoot grizzly bears;

3. Trapping of grizzly bears and black bears with steel-jawed leg hold traps and wire snares;

4. Luring grizzly bears with rotting meat, sugar, and pet food to get a point blank kill; and

5. Denning of black bear mothers and cubs during hibernation.

H.J. Res. 69, if adopted, would prevent the Administration from ever issuing a rule on this topic, foreclosing our Federal wildlife managers from regulating these activities in any way under current law.

The decision to ban these cruel hunting practices came directly from professional wildlife managers from the FWS based in Alaska and is consistent with science-based wildlife management practices.

In addition, the FWS statutory mandate requires that the agency conserve wildlife species.

The FWS appealed to the Alaska Board of Game dozens of times to amend its rules to ensure that the FWS statutory mandate was being followed.

The Board of Game's continued refusal to do so forced FWS to initiate this rulemaking to ensure that its statutory mandate of conserving wildlife species on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska is followed.

Mr. Speaker, a statewide poll conducted in February 2016 showed Alaskans opposed denning of wolves by more than a 2-to-1 margin.

The poll showed that Alaska voters strongly support eliminating these cruel and unsporting methods of killing native carnivores on National Wildlife Refuges in their state.

Additionally, at a series of public meetings on the rule, many Alaskans turned out to publicly support the rule because they want these inhumane, unsustainable, unsporting practices to end.

Mr. Speaker, another reason to oppose H.J. Res. 69 is that it would damage wildlife tourism and hurt the economy of Alaska.

These are federal lands, maintained with federal taxpayer dollars, and millions of Americans travel to Alaska each year for the unique opportunity to see bears, wolves, caribou, lynx, and other species on these lands.

Wildlife watchers contribute over $2 billion to the economy of Alaska—five times more than the amount generated in Alaska from hunting activity.

The wildlife within our National Wildlife Refuges is a national resource and Americans across the country care about protecting it for future generations of Americans.

For these reasons, I strongly opposed H.J. Res. 69, and urge my colleagues to join me.

I ask my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this disapproval and to support and stand with these beautiful animals.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the article, ''The Fight to Protect Alaska's Predators,'' and an article regarding Safari Club.

[The Humane Society of the United States, Oct. 19, 2016]

THE FIGHT TO PROTECT ALASKA'S PREDATORS

(By Karen E. Lange)

Ed Schmitt, a retired surgeon, moved to Alaska to experience the wild. He left Colorado for the Kenai Peninsula, south of Anchorage, where he could fish in a river that flowed right outside his house and hunt, he says, in a way that respects wildlife and the environment. Schmitt enjoyed casting for salmon and seeing brown bears, also known as grizzly bears, fishing nearby.

He never wanted to kill them. But over 25 years, development and new roads ate away bear habitat. And a different mentality from Schmitt's, one that treats large predators as

creatures to be eliminated so populations of moose and caribou can flourish, took its toll on the Kenai's brown bears. Schmitt hasn't seen one in three years.

''Most of us that live in Alaska are here because we recognized that it has something that the rest of the world doesn't,'' says Schmitt, president of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, which is working with The HSUS to protect animals from trophy hunting abuses. ''The wildness can be destroyed by people. We've stopped seeing the wildlife because we've made it go away.'' A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule released in August aims to preserve the state's biodiversity by banning cruel and unsporting hunting methods on the 76 million acres of Alaska's federal national wildlife refuges. (Last year, the National Park Service issued a similar rule for the more than 20 million acres of federal preserves within the state). Under the rule, supported by The HSUS and a network of scientists and local advocacy groups, hunters will no longer be able to bait brown bears, trap brown or black bears or use a plane to find bears from the air and then immediately land and shoot them. In addition, trophy hunters will not be allowed to kill black bear mothers and cubs or wolf and coyote mothers and pups in their dens (subsistence hunters are exempt). And ''predator control'' programs, which let hunters kill greater numbers of carnivores in the hope the populations of prey animals such as caribou will increase, won't be permitted in national wildlife refuges.

''This is the first time the federal government has stood up to the state of Alaska's brutal practices in 37 years,'' says Wendy Keefover, HSUS native carnivore protection manager, who led meetings on the rule in Anchorage, Juneau and Fairbanks to encourage constituents to speak out.

An HSUS poll in March showed a majority of Alaskans support these restrictions, and the Fish and Wildlife Service says most people who submitted comments favored the rule. The change came despite well-financed campaigns by the NRA and Safari Club International against it, and the opposition of the hunters, trappers and hunting guides on the state's Board of Game, as well as Alaska's representatives in Congress.

HSUS Alaska state director Michael Haukedalen says the number of residents who rallied to support the rule shows there's a constituency for reform. ''It's not true that all Alaskans are OK with the state running rampant on public lands,'' he says. ''Only a minority of Alaskans are hunters, and even fewer kill animals just for a trophy.''

In the 1980s and 1990s, citizen ballot initiatives passed bans on cruel and unsporting hunting practices. However, these were later overridden by the state legislature and governor. In 1994, the legislature enacted a law requiring the state's Department of Fish and Game to practice ''intensive management'' of predators if caribou, moose and deer populations dropped below certain levels.

For 10 years federal officials tried to negotiate with the Alaska Board of Game to protect wolves and bears from egregious hunting practices, says biologist Francis Mauer, retired from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

''It's this ever-increasing fervor to kill predators in Alaska,'' he says. ''The federal agencies realized these hunting practices are inconsistent with the purpose for which the parks and reserves were established, and they had a responsibility to act.''

The fight against hunting abuses has now shifted to Washington, D.C., where Rep. Don Young (R–AK) got riders into House appropriations and energy bills that would undo both the Fish and Wildlife and National Park Service rules. Similar language was slipped into a Senate appropriations bill. The HSUS and other groups are encouraging Congress to reject these riders before sending the bills to the president.

Schmitt says he, like most hunters in Alaska, is appalled by the practices the Fish and Wildlife Service has banned. ''The notion that people don't want any rules is a myth. We want good rules, just like everybody else.''

[From the Clarion, Feb. 9, 2017]

SAFARI CLUB SUES OVER NATIONAL PARK, WILDLIFE REFUGE REGULATIONS

(By Elizabeth Earl)

The Safari Club International has filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service over its hunting rules on federal lands in Alaska.

The nonprofit, one of the largest hunting advocacy organizations in the country, is challenging a set of rules the three organizations enacted in 2016 to restrict hunting and trapping practices on national preserves and on national wildlife refuges in the state, specifically on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The rules conflict with the state's ability to manage wildlife and interfere with Alaskans' ability to hunt and trap, among other impacts, according to the lawsuit filed Jan. 19 in U.S. District Court for Alaska.

The federal government owns more than half of Alaska, managed by a smattering of different federal agencies. The U.S. Department of the Interior manages national wildlife refuges through the Fish and Wildlife Service and national parks and preserves through the National Park Service. Taken together, NPS manages about 54 million acres of the state, and Fish and Wildlife manages about 76.7 million acres.

Specifically, the lawsuit takes issue with a rule that bans predator control activities on national wildlife refuges ''unless based on sound science and in response to a conservation concern or is necessary to meet refuge purposes, federal laws or (Fish and Wildlife Service) policy,'' according to an Aug. 3, 2016 press release about the rule.

The National Park Service's rule, which was finalized Oct. 23, 2015, prohibits the taking of brown bears over bait and the take of wolves and coyotes between May 1 and Aug. 9, which is designated as denning season, and eliminating the ''temporary'' closure category for national preserves in Alaska, which previously expired after 12 months. The lawsuit claims these closures allow Alaska personnel ''unlimited discretion'' to close areas to sport hunting without providing rulemaking notice or public comment opportunities.

The lawsuit also claims the consequences of the National Park Service's actions extend beyond its boundaries because the predators and prey do not remain within the boundaries of the national preserves.

''The NPS exceeded its statutory authority in promulgating the NPS Regulations, as the regulations illegally override the State's authority to regulate the methods and means of taking Alaska's wildlife,'' the lawsuit states.

The complaint against Fish and Wildlife's general rule prohibiting predator control activities on Alaska national wildlife refuges is for similar reasons. On the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge specifically, which covers a broad swath of the Kenai Peninsula between the Russian River and the community of Sterling and stretches down toward the Fox River Flats on the southern peninsula, the lawsuit objects to the public use restrictions that prohibit some plane and motorboat use and lynx, coyote and wolf hunting within the Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area and prohibit bear baiting for brown bears, require a permit for baiting black bears and prohibit using a dog to hunt big game except for black bears, with a special use permit, among other rules.

The lawsuit claims that neither the National Park Service nor Fish and Wildlife completed the proper National Environmental Protection Act processes for their regulations.

The lawsuit asks for the court to declare all the regulations as invalid and enjoin the agencies from enacting the regulations.

The suit was filed less than a week after the State of Alaska filed its own lawsuit against the same rules. The state's suit claims very similar grievances against the rules, saying it breaches the state's ability to manage its wildlife effectively, according to a news release from Gov. Bill Walker's website.

The Safari Club International supports the state's lawsuit but chose to file its own anyway, said Safari Club International President Larry Higgins in a statement. The Safari Club's lawsuit focuses more specifically on the rights of nonsubsistence users than the state's lawsuit and contains complaints specific to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge rules, which the state's lawsuit does not, he said.

''Safari Club concluded it was necessary to file its own lawsuit to represent and protect fully the interests of its members and others who hunt in Alaska for subsistence and/or for nonsubsistence purposes,'' he said. ''Both lawsuits challenge regulations adopted by the Obama Administration that prohibit certain hunting methods on National Preserves and National Wildlife Refuges.''

The main issue the group has with the rules is state wildlife management, said Eddie Grasser, the vice president of the Safari Club's Alaska chapter. All successful wildlife management in the U.S. is based on state management, he said.

''The main emphasis for our part, anyway, is the issue of state management,'' he said. ''We don't feel the federal government has the authority to manage wildlife because of the way the system has evolved over time.''

Higgins said in his statement that the club will support the state's legal efforts as well.

''To the extent possible, Safari Club will work cooperatively with the State, and others who may decide to challenge the regulations, to present the best arguments to the court,'' he said.

The National Park Service had no comment on the Safari Club's lawsuit and the Fish and Wildlife Service did not respond to a request for comment Thursday.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT).

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the assertion that removing this rule would allow for egregious, cruel, and unsporting hunting methods is just totally false. The people of Alaska, I trust them to manage the game of that State. The idea, the accusation that this rule allows for shooting of wolf pups in their den is totally false. Disturbing wolf dens for any reason—hunting, trapping, or for wildlife management—is illegal in the State of Alaska.

The 2016–2017 Alaska Trapping Regulations state:

> The following methods are illegal for taking furbearers: You may not disturb or destroy beaver houses or any furbearer den.

Again, the people of Alaska can be trusted to manage their game.

Additionally, the claim that removing this rule would allow for the use of airplanes or helicopters to hunt is totally false. Using aircraft is illegal in the State of Alaska. The 2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations state:

> You may not take game by driving, herding, harassing, or molesting game with any motorized vehicle such as an aircraft, airboat, snow machine, motorboat, et cetera.

Finally, the claim that removing this rule would allow for trapping of grizzly bears and black bears with steel-jawed leghold traps, again, simply totally false. Trapping or snaring big game is illegal in the State of Alaska.

The 2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations state:

> You may not take game by using a trap or a snare to take big game, fur animals, or small game.

As you can see, these claims are nothing but false rhetoric from antisportsmen that think they know better how to manage Alaska's wildlife than the good people of Alaska do. Alaska law already precludes these practices, yet they are being used as an emotional argument to hide what is clearly a bureaucratic overreach which unfairly targets the citizens of Alaska.

Mr. BEYER. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy and I appreciate his leadership on this.

I just heard my friend talk about these imaginary practices. If they are, in fact, imaginary, what is the problem in terms of having Fish and Wildlife moving to bring hunting standards in Federal lands in Alaska more in line with standards for other Federal lands across America?

The fact is that these practices can, in fact, occur, and it is the judgment of the professionals in this field that developed this proposal for the Fish and Wildlife Service. These are the people who are charged with understanding the dynamics, who understand the interaction, based on sound science going forward. The majority of people in Alaska do not support such practices. These are basically the rules that the rest of America deals with in terms of our wildlife refuges.

I spent a lot of time working in the area of animal welfare. It is something that I find is one of those rare areas in Congress where there is far more agreement than disagreement. We find, across the country, 25,000 organizations that are dedicated to animal welfare. This is an area that I am sad to see we are breaking down now with, I think, unnecessary controversy.

Being able to deal with wildlife management and protection, being able to deal with humane hunting practices, to be able to allow the professionals in the Fish and Wildlife Service and elsewhere to be able to help in developing uniform standards is something that should not be unnecessarily divisive. I am hopeful that we give the Fish and Wildlife Service the authority and responsibility to manage these refuges and that we respect the fact that they took public input into account; they weighed the comments; they put forward a thoughtful rule.

Being able to nullify this rule entirely, return to some of the most inhumane practices, is simply inappropriate. Instead of rolling back these rules, we should respect the agency's expertise, the wishes of the vast majority of the people we represent, and uniform provisions to apply to all wildlife refuges.

I am really disappointed that the rhetoric reaches this level and that we are rushing ahead with making changes like this without providing the foundation that would normally occur in the legislative process. This rule is a culmination of a great deal of time and energy, public input, scientific expertise, and hard work. To overturn it summarily, as this Congress has been doing in other areas, I think is a step backwards. It is something that is not supported by the public, and I think it is something that we ought to strongly reject.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, one quick point is that these national wildlife refuges are U.S. public lands paid for by U.S. taxpayers and should be managed for the benefit of all. So let me quote former Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe, recently departed, who said these ''are not game farms managed for a slice of their diversity for the benefit of a few people who would call themselves hunters.''

Much has been made in this debate this afternoon, Madam Speaker, about whether ANILCA prohibits this Fish and Wildlife rule. We have gone back and forth with different cases. Let me just quote a few key paragraphs.

Section 302 and 303 of ANILCA establishes 16 national wildlife refuges, and for each one, the purpose is stated for which the refuge is to be established and shall be managed, including: ''to conserve fish and wildlife populations in their natural diversity.''

The law doesn't say wildlife should be managed in some alternate state of unnatural diversity where no wolves, no bears, and overpopulated moose herds can destroy the landscape.

Both the ANILCA, and the Improvement Act, the 1998 law that reorganized the National Wildlife Refuge System, managed Alaska's Federal refuge managers to conserve natural diversity, a value that the Fish and Wildlife Services correctly noted is incompatible with indiscriminate predator culls.

Every Federal court to consider the question, including the Ninth Circuit, which contains Alaska, has held the States lack the authority to overrule Fish and Wildlife Service management decisions concerning Federal refuge management. So this has already been before the courts. The courts, I believe, have already decided.

Madam Speaker, in the few minutes I have left, let me just quote a few of the letters we received from Alaska residents in opposition to the resolution before us.

Elizabeth Figus, from Juneau, writes: ''I am an Alaskan. I hunt and fish, and I support regulations that prohibit cruel killing. This rule would rightly prohibit controversial and scientifically unjustified killing methods on over 76 million acres of Federal lands in Alaska.

''A hunter who cannot comply with humane methods of the trade/sport is simply lazy and undeserving of the right to harvest the flesh of another living thing.

''This is the 21st century, not the 1800s. We must carry out our hunting in a careful and organized fashion to ensure the safety of Alaskan residents as well as the sustainability of the wild animal resources into the future.''

This from Elisabeth Moorehead from Eagle River: ''My husband and I owned and operated a successful wildlife tourism business in Alaska for 27 years. The business still continues in the capable hands of one of our guides. . . . I am writing to convey my displeasure over the content of the joint resolution you recently introduced in response to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulations that ban cruel and unsporting methods of killing bears, wolves and coyotes on Federal wildlife refuges in Alaska.''

And from Fran Mauer in Fairbanks: ''Over the last 15 years I have watched the state hunting regulations for wolves and bears get progressively more extreme. These methods go far beyond any common sense, are not supported by science, and have no place in our Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges. This is the result of the special interest lobby of extreme pro-hunting groups. . . . I for one, and many other Alaskan hunters, do not want to see the State of Alaska turn our National Wildlife Refuges into game farms.''

And, finally, from Jeff Fair from Palmer: ''I write you as a 23-year Alaskan wildlife biologist . . . Currently 64 years of age, I hunt and fish and enjoy a permanent license to do so in The Great Land.

''As a biologist, I recognize that predator control does not work in the long run to stabilize or maximize cervid populations. I also recognize that an attempt to repeal U.S. Fish and Wildlife regs on these lands would be an attempt to circumvent, contradict, overturn, or simply break the Federal law that establishes the Fish and Wildlife Service's mission and authority for these lands. And as a hunter I fear for the reputation of the hunting tradition, including conservation and fair-chase, when some service anti-predator techniques are allowed anywhere, including on federal lands.''

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1330

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman

from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the one who actually lives there and knows the area and knows the names of the towns.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker, under the decorum of the House, I won't call it bull. I will just say it is a lot of misinformation and outright story tales, the information conveyed to these gentlemen and the ladies from The Humane Society. That is what it is.

There is no sport hunter who is going to be shooting cubs and sows. In fact, there is no one in the State who does not support my resolution of organized hunters, viewers. I have not had any of that.

Yes, you got some letters. And I believe the best way to judge is, if they don't like what I am doing, don't elect me. I am speaking for the people from my State, not Virginia, not a used car salesman. I am speaking for my people.

The second false claim is it allows aerial shooting and gunning of bears. That is not what this is about. It is about the law, and we will win it in court. But I don't want to win it in court. I want to establish the fact that an agency does not have the right to break the law.

As far as Dan Ashe goes, well, did he have any specialists? No. He did this because of interest groups, governing by interest groups, not the hunters, not the Alaskans, not the gunmen of Alaska, but The Humane Society that put out all of this propaganda.

Denning of wolves—and, by the way, I have to remind people. We used to den wolves. I have done it myself. I got paid 50 bucks for every wolf I got. You know who paid me? Uncle Sam did when we were a territory. And when we became a State, we did not allow that.

So let us do our job as a State, instead of having this Congress try to stop it with an agency.

So I am asking my colleagues to vote for the law, as you should uphold as you took your oath for this office, the law.

And if you continue this misinformation, I feel sorry for you, and I feel sorry for the interest groups.

So, Madam Speaker, I do urge a ''yes'' vote on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WAGNER). The gentleman is reminded to address the Chair.

Mr. BEYER. Madam Speaker, just in mild response, I am, I believe, heartened to know—that may be the wrong verb—but, at least, respect my friend and colleague from Alaska's notion or assertion that these terrible, inhumane hunting practices, which we have talked about for the last hour—whether it is gassing wolves in the den or shooting bears from the helicopter or using bait for the bears or many of the iron leg traps—that all these things do not occur in Alaska on the wildlife refuges; that they are illegal in Alaska. If that is so, that is an excellent thing.

I wonder why the need for the Congressional Review Act resolution to overturn the Fish and Wildlife regulations if none of these are, in fact, happening.

In any case, there is still a legitimate debate about whether the Fish and Wildlife regulation contravenes ANILCA and the state establishment act. Hopefully, this doesn't have to go to court in order to do that, but I think there seems to be enough judicial precedent that if it did go to court, the Fish and Wildlife regulations would be upheld.

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

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

Madam Speaker, we are here to repeal a rule issued by the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service to restrict hunting on the national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

This rule is a solution. The only problem is no one knows for what it is a solution because there is no problem. And the sad part is that means that this rule is basically a useless rule. It has no efficacy to it. Despite the assertions that had been made repeatedly and a cacophony of all sorts of practices that are seeming to be wrong and bad, this rule doesn't do that.

This rule does not abandon any of the practices you are talking about on subsistence hunting, only on nonsubsistence hunting, which simply means that, if you are classified as a subsistence hunter, anything that the other side talked about and raled about is actually allowed by the silly rule. That is why the rule makes no sense.

The State of Alaska had it under control, and there is no real problem that is solved by this rule that is totally inefficient, but did make something nice about it.

Now, it makes things worse because it is talking about predator control only on nonsubsistence hunting. Unfortunately, the predators don't know, when they go after their prey, whether that prey is designed for a subsistence hunter or a recreation hunter. They haven't learned to distinguish that yet.

Ergo, how you administer this law is totally ineffective. It is impossible to do so, and what you do is simply make a blanket approach so that everyone gets harmed in the same equal fashion. That is what Fish and Wildlife has decided to do.

In addition to that, yes, it is illegal. It usurps State authority, and it usurps it very clearly. You know, it is amazing to me. I cannot believe that in the first Congress that we had, the Founding Fathers were there coming up with the Bill of Rights and the 10th Amendment, they thought the 10th Amendment would eventually some day be imagined by a bureaucrat in Washington to overrule Congress on matters that were clearly intended for State discretion, but that is precisely what we have done here.

This rule violates three congressionally passed statutes that have precedence on this particular issue. And this rule violates Federal law passed by Congress on three separate occasions.

What was supposed to be envisioned with this system was a cooperative relationship between the State and the Federal Government. What this rule simply does is allow for Fish and Wildlife on the Federal level to have supremacy, to destroy that cooperation and coordination and take over control totally. That is wrong. It should never be there.

There are 16 different refuges up there. That is 76 million acres of land now going to be controlled by the Fish and Wildlife system here in Washington. That is more acreage than 46 of the 50 States that we have. And, once again, for many of those people, this hunting is a source of subsistence up there.

Here is the bottom line: Mr. BLUMENAUER came up here and said, why don't we let the professionals make their decisions. They do. Those professionals are the Alaska Department of Fish and Game who know exactly what they are doing, they know the area, and they know the animals.

The so-called helicopter hunting that was raled against up here is not done by any recreational hunter. Alaska doesn't allow that. The Alaska Fish and Game will do that for management control based on scientific purposes and reasons and that only.

This rule doesn't change any of that. No. I'm sorry, this rule actually doesn't change any of the recreational hunting, which is already outlawed by the State of Alaska. It only stops the Fish and Wildlife system of Alaska from simply doing their job as they know how to do it.

I include in the RECORD a letter supported by 27 different organizations all dealing with outdoor life in support of this particular resolution.

FEBRUARY 6, 2017.

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

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY, Majority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND LEADER MCCARTHY: We write representing organizations that collectively include millions of wildlife conservationists, hunter conservationists, wildlife enthusiasts, and wildlife scientists, in strong support of H.J. Res. 49 from Cong. Young (AK), which would nullify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) final rule ''Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska'' (81 Fed. Reg. 52248 (August 5, 2016)). Our community exhausted all Executive Branch appeals and remedies urging the FWS to slow down the Proposed Rule, and revise it to reflect a proposal mutually agreed to by the State of Alaska and the FWS; all to no end. It is time for Congress to nullify this final rule.

This final rule boldly preempts the authority of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage wildlife for both recreational and subsistence hunting on NWRs, which authority of the state is affirmed by Congress in the Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. The FWS final rule was premised on meeting as a priority the FWS policy on Biological Integrity, Diversity and Environmental Health; which

would inadvisably set a precedent nationally. Many members of our organizations enjoy Alaska's bounty of fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for unrivaled hunting, fishing and outdoor experiences. The sustainable management of these natural resources needs to be led by the State working in cooperation with the FWS. We urge that you favorably consider H.J. Res. 49 which will restore the jurisdictional state-federal relationship as Congress has previously directed.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our concerns about this harmful and illegal rule which if left un-remedied, significantly affects the use and appreciation of the magnificent natural resources found in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, Dallas Safari Club, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Houston Safari Club, Masters of Foxhounds Association, Mule Deer Foundation, National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, National Trappers Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Orion the Hunter's Institute.

Pheasants Forever, Professional Outfitters and Guides, Quail Forever, Quality Deer Management Association, Ruffed Grouse Society, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Safari Club International, Sportsmen's Alliance, Whitetails Unlimited, Wild Sheep Foundation, Wildlife Forever, Wildlife Management Institute.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, this comes from groups all over the Nation who understand what is going on and also realize the problem of this—I mean, there are some people who might think this only deals with Alaska. Technically, it does.

The problem is, if this happens to Alaska, if the ability of the Federal Government to supersede the State happens in Alaska, this could also happen to anyone of the lower 48 States.

We are simply one lawsuit away from Fish and Wildlife Service being either allowed or required to order similar regulations for everything across the lower 48 States as well. And that is what is so difficult and impossible to understand.

Look, let me try and sum it up this way: None of the practices that have been railed about today actually are existing, and any of those that are are easily controlled by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The underlying premise, both of the rule that the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior did and the underlying premise of most of the debate that has happened here on the floor, is that only somebody who lives here in Washington has the intelligence, the foresight, the vision to make these kind of rules that unfortunately people in Alaska are simply too dumb to do it. You are a bunch of redneck hicks that don't understand how to rule yourself. You don't understand science. You barely have television.

I don't know what it is, but why do we have this mindset that only Washington can make these decisions when actually the States have proven, not only that are they capable, they are superior to what happens from this Department here in Washington.

That is what this is about, an illegal rule that simply takes away from the States what they are doing and what they are doing well; and that is why this should be opposed. That is why this rule should be pulled away. This midnight rule, once again, should be taken back.

Allow them to start over and do something intelligently. At least, recognize the professionals—the real professionals who work in the States to make this system work. They can do it. They have done it. Allow them to do their jobs, and protect the rest of us from any judge saying, oh, if it happened in Alaska, maybe it can happen in your State as well. That is the fear.

This is a rule passed by Fish and Wildlife at the last minute of the Obama administration that doesn't solve anything and will be impossible to administer. It violates everything that has gone on before.

Vote for this rule. Bring back sanity and allow the States to do their job as they are supposed to do and as the law prescribes for them to do.

I urge support of this. I don't know if you are undecided on whether I was for this resolution or not. Just, for the record, yes, I support this resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 123, the previous question is ordered on the joint resolution.

The question is on engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the joint resolution.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF FINAL RULE BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 123, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 43) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 123, the joint resolution is considered read.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 43

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients (81 Fed. Reg. 91852; December 19, 2016), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) and the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.J. Res. 43, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

□ 1345

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my resolution of disapproval, H.J. Res. 43, which uses the authority of the Congressional Review Act to overturn the Obama administration's 11th-hour rule forcing States like Tennessee to fund abortion providers.

I want to begin today by stipulating very clearly what this resolution is about because, while I am unapologetically pro-life, you don't have to be in order to support this resolution. You just have to believe in the Tenth Amendment.

Despite the histrionics you may hear on the other side of the aisle today, with today's resolution, we are not, we are not, one, voting to defund Planned Parenthood in any way, shape, or form; we are not voting to cut title X funding; and we are not voting to restrict abortion rights.

Madam Speaker, we are simply voting today to affirm the rights of States to fund the healthcare providers that best suit their needs, without fear of reprisal from their own Federal Government.

I didn't realize this was a partisan issue. It shouldn't be, because that is how the title X grant program functioned for more than 45 years, until the Obama administration decided to leave this parting gift to abortion industry on its way out the door.

For me, this is a personal issue. As a registered nurse, I know that vulnerable women seeking true comprehensive care deserve better than abortion-centric facilities like Planned Parenthood. So, as a State legislator, I worked within my authority to make sure that Tennessee honored the will of

our pro-life populace and steered our State's share of title X dollars away from healthcare providers that performed abortion.

As a result, our share of title X grants have been sent exclusively to the Tennessee Department of Health, which then allocates them to the county health departments and other qualified providers that protect the lives of the most vulnerable. That was Tennessee's right, and it has been able to exercise that right while protecting access to comprehensive care for those who are most in need.

As a matter of fact, according to HHS' own 2015 title X Family Planning Annual Report, our State provided care under title X to more than 75,000 Tennesseeans. That means that we served even more citizens than the more populated States like Michigan and Virginia.

But in December of last year, the Obama administration decided to intervene, setting unprecedented new parameters on how States must select title X grantees that were specifically designed to prop up its political allies in the abortion industry.

With my resolution, I am proposing that we go back just a few short weeks prior to December 15, 2016, the day before the Obama administration decided to reconfigure this 45-year-old program with its ill-conceived order. That is all my resolution does is to take us back 45 years to the way the program has operated.

I urge my colleagues to give States the freedom and the flexibility to take care of their citizens the best way that they know how by voting ''yes'' on this H.J. Res. 43.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Madam Speaker, we are not even a full month into the new Presidency. Yet, the President and the Republicans in Congress have already launched numerous attacks on women's health and access to care. Here's just a few of the examples aside from today.

They are charging ahead to dismantle the Affordable Care Act without making any promises to preserve the vital protections for women that are in that bill.

They imposed and dramatically expanded the global gag rule, which harms women's access to health care around the world.

And just after the historic Women's March, House Republicans passed H.R. 7, an extreme bill that effectively bans private insurance companies from covering comprehensive healthcare services.

But here we are again today, with another bill that threatens access to family planning care for millions of our most vulnerable citizens by attacking title X. Title X is the only Federal program dedicated solely to family planning, which includes a range of services that help women and their partners prepare for pregnancy and ensure healthy spacing between births.

Title X helps 4 million people who are uninsured. Title X centers also play an important role in reducing unintended pregnancy, and title X centers are also major points of access in our safety net.

Six in 10 women who go to a title X center consider it their major source of health care. What this rule that Republicans want to roll back does is it simply reinforces longstanding requirements that say that States cannot discriminate against providers for reasons that are unrelated to their qualifications to perform family planning services when distributing title X funding. In other words, if an organization provides abortions with its own private money but it qualifies for title X, it can still get that funding.

Now I keep hearing from my colleagues that this violates states' rights, but that completely ignores how Federal programs work. Virtually all Federal funding opportunities require a State to adhere to certain standards to ensure policy goals are met, and that is exactly what this rule did.

Republicans will also argue that community health centers can fill all the gaps created and accessed by denying these centers title X funding. This claim has been debunked on numerous occasions.

For example, in 21 percent of counties with a Planned Parenthood center, Planned Parenthood is the only safety net provider in the area. That is why the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated, if Planned Parenthood were defunded, as many as 390,000 women would lose access to care, and 650,000 women would have reduced access. That is why repealing this rule is a serious problem.

Just this afternoon I read a quote, and here's what it said: ''Patients and doctors should be making the big decisions—not government bureaucrats.''

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

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

Let me say that again. ''Patients and doctors should be making the big decisions—not government bureaucrats.''

Who said this?

Margaret Sanger? No.

Cecile Richards? No.

Hillary Clinton? No.

The person who said this this afternoon is the Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN. I couldn't agree with him any more when it comes to title X family planning money. This should be made by patients and their doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who has been a champion for life and been fighting for life for a long time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank the gentlewoman for her extraordinary leadership on the life issue.

Madam Speaker, subsidized by over $500 million taxpayer dollars each year, Planned Parenthood dismembers or chemically poisons a baby to death every 2 minutes, killing over 7 million innocent children since 1973.

Undercover videos in 2015 exposed, in numbing candor, several high-level Planned Parenthood leaders nonchalantly talking about procuring children's organs for a price. They describe altering gruesome dismemberment procedures to preserve intact livers, hearts, and lungs from freshly killed babies.

All of this begs the question, Madam Speaker, why are U.S. taxpayers giving half a billion dollars each year to Planned Parenthood?

H.J. Res. 43 simply allows States to redirect funds away from abortion clinics and does not reduce funding for title X by so much as a penny. Those funds are just redirected to other health clinics that provide women's health care and don't engage in abortion.

In mid-December, on his way out the door, former President Obama finalized a rule that coerces States to fund Planned Parenthood with their title X money.

Prior to the Obama rule, States had chosen, five of them, to award title X funds to non-Planned Parenthood entities. These five States, Tennessee, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Ohio, account for nearly $16 million in annual title X funding and serve over 279,000 individuals a year. These five States redirected those funds to other health clinics.

But under the Obama rule, these State recipients are threatened with losing all—I say again—all of their title X support if they do not comply. This is the definition of coercion.

The Obama administration essentially told States: You must use your family planning dollars to support abortionists, or we will take away your family planning dollars.

I thank the gentlewoman for her courage, for her insight, and for offering this rule for our consideration today.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), the ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 43. This resolution is simply another attack on women's health and another attempt by Republicans to limit women's access to high-quality, essential care.

For decades, title X family planning program has funded grants that provide millions of Americans each year with access to a broad range of preventive health services, including contraception care and cancer screenings. Title X is a critical safety net for low-income women and teens; and for many patients, this program is their only source of health care.

But the Republicans want to limit access to these services and allow States to discriminate against certain providers, all as part of their ongoing ideological crusade against abortion.

I stress, this resolution would permit States to prohibit reproductive healthcare providers from participating in the title X program, and would allow States to block access to care if the provider separately performs abortions or is affiliated with health centers that do.

Now, we already have seen what happens when States take actions to discriminate against providers in the title X program. Access goes down, the unintended pregnancy rate goes up, and the spread of sexually transmitted infections increases.

So I would urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this resolution because Republicans should not be entitled to pick and choose providers in the title X program and play politics with women's health.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), a freshman and a physician.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam Speaker, this past December, our past President finalized a rule requiring States to fund Planned Parenthood through title X funding.

Today I rise as a cosponsor of and in support of this joint resolution, H.J. Res. 43, which repeals this Obama rule and allows States like mine, Kansas, to choose how to best allocate title X funds. The Obama rule is yet another example of government overreach that tries to force my State to fund Planned Parenthood.

Redirecting Federal funds away from abortion providers does not reduce funds for other title X programs. Instead, this will allow even more funding available for county health departments and other public health clinics for family planning, sexually transmitted disease testing, and lifestyle choices education.

While Planned Parenthood remains a political organization that spent tens of thousands of dollars in the last election to oppose pro-life candidates, let me stop and salute the nurses and social workers back home at the Barton County Health Department where I worked for years, and salute my fellow doctors, Dr. Perry Smith and Dr. Bill King, and everyone's favorite nurse practitioner, Sheila Hein, who dedicated themselves to helping women.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, I hope the women of America are watching. Let there be no doubt about the actions of congressional Republicans and the Trump administration. They will oppose your right to make your own health decision and limit access to your reproductive health care at every available juncture.

Rather than work to create jobs, House Republicans are helping State officials block women from getting contraception and other reproductive health services.

Today's bill would particularly harm the neediest Americans, as it could deny them the opportunity to visit the health provider of their choice, which in many instances may be the only provider available within hours of their home.

Sadly, this will be just one of the many assaults on women's rights in the 115th Congress.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER), who is the chairman of our Republican Study Committee.

Mr. MESSER. Madam Speaker, the Federal Government should not fund abortions, and it should not force States to fund them either. That is one reason this body recently voted to make the Hyde amendment permanent and governmentwide.

The vast majority of Americans support this policy as a matter of conscience and agree that tax dollars should not fund abortion procedures. Today's bill is consistent with that principle.

But despite the rhetoric across the aisle, the bill permits, but does not require, States to direct title X funds to health providers that do not provide abortions.

Without this bill, States would be forced to fund the abortion industry by Federal bureaucrats. This is an issue of states' rights as well as one of conscience.

□ 1400

I am proud to support this measure, stand up for States, and defend life.

I want to thank my colleague, DIANE BLACK, for her hard work and leadership on getting this bill to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to vote for its passage.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Colorado for her leadership.

For almost 50 years, a law called title X has ensured that women across America, no matter their station in life, can receive expert advice on how and when to plan their families, on contraceptives, and also receive breast and cervical cancer screenings.

It is smart public policy. It often allows women to complete their education and to get a job to become financially independent. It is cost effective for all of us because it saves public money on prenatal, maternity, and newborn care, and it has worked to decrease teenage and unintended pregnancies.

In Florida, in 2014 alone, over 160,000 were counseled through nonprofit agencies and community health centers, and over 38,000 unintended pregnancies were prevented, which helped prevent about 18,000 unintended births. That resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in cost savings. Plus, it is difficult to put a price tag on the ability of someone to become self-sufficient and get a good start in life.

Title X is critical for many of my neighbors in Florida, and it should be protected. So it is sad to see my Republican colleagues target working families and young women to restrict access to contraceptives, family planning, and other health services. If Republicans are successful, it would only harm our communities, and in doing so, you are targeting the folks who need the help the most.

These politically motivated attacks on women's health are a distraction from the real issues. Across the country, women, parents, moms, and dads need greater economic and personal security, not less. That is what Congress should be focused on.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this harmful resolution.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY), who is my classmate.

Mrs. ROBY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 43. Congress must use its authority to strike this rule and stop the Federal Government from forcing States to funnel taxpayer money to abortion providers.

This rule is wrong on process and it is wrong on policy. First of all, States have every right to put in place reasonable guidelines for how their Federal dollars are spent. For Washington to attempt to coerce States in this way would be bad enough, but for unelected bureaucrats in the Department of Health and Human Services to go around Congress at the eleventh hour of the Obama administration is just outrageous.

Madam Speaker, I think we all agree that low-income women should have access to essential title X services, but why is it necessary for those services to be funded at the Nation's largest provider of abortion? It isn't, of course, but the abortion industry and its supporters want us to believe that it is.

When it comes to funding, they like to pretend that abortion doesn't exist and that Planned Parenthood is the only place where women can get health care, but that is not true. The truth is that there are more than 13,000 federally qualified and rural health centers that offer low-cost health care to women. These centers outnumber Planned Parenthood clinics 20 to 1; they just don't preform abortions.

Understanding this, some States have rightly enacted laws and policies redirecting title X dollars away from abortion providers and toward these noncontroversial clinics. If the true goal here were to ensure women's health care, no one should have a problem with that. But that wasn't the goal, and everybody knows it.

There is a reason people call this rule President Obama's parting gift to Planned Parenthood. It was a blatant, transparent attempt to preserve the

pipeline of funding to the Nation's largest abortion business. It was wrong, and I urge my colleagues to vote to nullify it today.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER).

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership.

Madam Speaker, it is very hard for me to listen to the conversation on the other side of the aisle because it is a conversation they are having with themselves, and it is a conversation we are having with ourselves.

Let me be really clear. This is not about Planned Parenthood and abortion because we already know that Planned Parenthood gets no funding for abortions in this country, pure and simple. Planned Parenthood gets funding through title X to provide services for breast cancer screenings, cancer screenings, STDs, and contraception.

What my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are willing to say is: We just want to make sure Planned Parenthood doesn't get a dime. Just squeeze every dime out of them that may be Federal dollars, even though they provide a really important health service.

So I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I guess what you are saying is, to the 80,000 women last year who were diagnosed with cancer because they went to a Planned Parenthood facility and of the 800,000 that were screened for cancer, you would rather see them die.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), who is my fellow Ways and Means Committee member.

Mrs. NOEM. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.J. Res. 43 which overturns an Obama-era regulation forcing States to administer title X healthcare funding to abortion providers like Planned Parenthood.

Time and again, this Congress has risen with bipartisan support to oppose the taxpayer funding of abortions. Annual provisions, including the Hyde amendment, have been passed repeatedly and have saved an estimated 2 million innocent lives.

Today, we rise again to stop the taxpayer funding of abortion providers. I want to be clear. Nothing we do today will take a penny from women's health. Instead, we are empowering States to redirect these funds to community health centers and hospitals that offer more comprehensive coverage to women.

In 2014 alone, Planned Parenthood performed more than 300,000 abortions while failing to provide even the most basic services, like prenatal care, at many of their facilities.

Hospitals and federally qualified health centers not only offer a broader range of services, but also greater accessibility in many cases. While there is only one Planned Parenthood center in South Dakota, we have six federally qualified health centers that operate in 45 service sites and serve more than 54,000 individuals per year. These care centers offer low-income families health services, but they don't perform abortions. We can support women's health—and, specifically, health care for low-income women—without supporting abortion providers.

Simply put, H.J. Res. 43 does not restrict access or funding to health care for low-income women. What it does do is help protect taxpayers from funding abortion providers. It empowers the States to direct healthcare funding to organizations that truly do support women's health, and it makes strides toward protecting the most vulnerable among us, the unborn.

I thank Chairman BLACK for her commitment to this issue, and I am proud to stand beside her as a partner in this effort.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from the State of Washington (Ms. DELBENE).

Ms. DELBENE. Madam Speaker, another week, another attack on women's health. Only 6 days ago, the Senate confirmed a Secretary of Health and Human Services who opposes women's access to no-cost birth control—a man who claimed that not one woman has struggled to afford contraception. Now, House leaders are working to eradicate the number of places where women can access birth control. It is unacceptable.

For more than 40 years, title X has been a bipartisan program that helps vulnerable Americans get basic health care like cancer screenings, HIV tests, and contraception. In 2014 alone, it prevented over 900,000 unintended pregnancies. But if this resolution passes, millions will find themselves without access to the essential care that they need, especially those in rural and underserved communities.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Our constituents deserve better. It is time to focus on the priorities that matter to the American people.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), who is a fellow Ways and Means Committee member and advocate for children.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative BLACK.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.J. Res. 43. This resolution will overturn an Obama administration rule that forces States to direct Federal funds to abortion providers like Planned Parenthood.

States receive Federal funding to support family planning services, and they have the discretion to distribute these title X funds in the way that best serves their communities. Many States have exercised their discretion to direct title X funding to community health centers and family health clinics that do not provide abortions and withhold funding from abortion providers like Planned Parenthood.

It is just common sense that States know the needs of their people and their communities better than Washington bureaucrats do. The States should be able to decide how these Federal funds are distributed.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration disagreed, so they issued a last-minute regulation in their final days in office that would force States to distribute funding to abortion providers. Their rule would take away States' abilities to direct title X funds to providers that offer comprehensive care but do not participate in abortion. It would force States to enable the flow of funds to Planned Parenthood and others in the abortion industry. I think it is reprehensible.

Now Congress has the opportunity to right this wrong and undo the massive overreach. We are taking action to defend taxpayers and defend life by using the Congressional Review Act to overturn this rule. Overturning this rule won't reduce funding for women's health care. In fact, it will let States direct these funds in the way that is best for their citizens. It will ensure States can support women's heath as well as protect the unborn.

Madam Speaker, this resolution is essential to rolling back executive overreach and standing up for the sanctity of life. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.J. Res. 43.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership.

This is not about States, and it is not about the Federal Government. It's about women and the rights of women. H.J. Res. 43 could impact nearly 4 million primarily low-income patients that receive family planning services at title X sites, annually, across the United States.

Of those 4 million patients, approximately 69 percent had incomes at or below the Federal poverty line, while 61 percent of those patients claimed the title X clinic as their only regular source of health care. About 60 percent of women who access care from family planning health centers consider it their main source; 4 in 10, it is their only source of care.

Approximately 1.5 million Planned Parenthood patients benefit from the Nation's family planning program. Approximately 20 percent of these patients identify as Hispanic and approximately 50 percent as African Americans.

Every public dollar invested in Planned Parenthood, $7.09 is saved in Medicaid-related costs. Planned Parenthood centers are roughly one-third of the program's clients, although Planned Parenthood health centers comprise 10 percent of the publicly supported safety and family net.

This resolution for which we should vote ''no'' is going to take away money from people who are in need, who need

health care. Where are the Republicans on women's rights?

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 43, a congressional resolution rescinding a rule promulgated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services providing important protections to ensure that women, men, and young people can see trusted reproductive health care providers, like Planned Parenthood, through the Title X family planning program.

I oppose the disapproval resolution because it is nothing more than a blatant attempt to persecute Planned Parenthood and make it easier for the state politicians to take away people's health care, specifically, the four million people who rely on Title X for birth control and other care.

From birth control, to well-woman exams, to cancer screenings, millions of Americans nationwide turn to Planned Parenthood and other safety net reproductive health providers as their trusted source of health care.

Many of these Americans, including low-income women, women of color, and those living in rural areas, are uninsured and rely on important public health programs for affordable health care, including Medicaid and the Title X family planning program.

But their access to health care is under attack across the country because in recent years because politicians in at least 14 states have taken action to block access to care through Title X, willfully ignoring the law, the recommendations of public health experts, and the clear and present need in their communities.

In September 2016, HHS issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) titled "Compliance With Title X Requirements by Project Recipients in Selecting Subrecipients" aiming to explicitly bar these types of actions.

HHS opened the proposed regulation to public comment, which closed in October 2016 and garnered widespread support, with 91% of the roughly 145,000 responses in favor of the rule.

Madam Speaker, Title X provides lifesaving, preventive care to millions of people and is cost-effective.

Title X helps ensure more than four million persons of low-income have health care in this country.

In fact, Title X is the only way that millions of low-income women or uninsured women have access to birth control, cancer screenings, STI tests, and other basic care.

Eighty-five percent of the people served by Planned Parenthood's family planning program have incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and 48 percent are uninsured.

In 2015 alone, Title X provided nearly 800,000 Pap tests, breast exams to 1 million women, nearly 5 million tests for STIs, and 1 million HIV tests.

About 60 percent of women who access care from a family planning health center consider it their main source of health care; for 4 in 10, it is their only source of care.

Approximately 1.5 million Planned Parenthood patients benefit from the nation's family planning program, 78 percent of whom live with incomes of 150 percent of the federal poverty level or less, the equivalent of $35,775 a year for a family of four in 2014.

Approximately 20 percent of these patients identify as Hispanic; and approximately 15 percent identify as African American.

For every public dollar invested in family planning, $7.09 is saved in Medicaid-related costs; that is savings to both federal and state governments and taxpayers.

Planned Parenthood health centers serve roughly one-third of the program's clients, although Planned Parenthood health centers comprise 10 percent of publicly supported safety net family planning centers.

Planned Parenthood health centers are located in the communities where access to care is most needed.

More than half of Planned Parenthood's health centers across the U.S. are in rural and underserved communities with limited access to health care.

Seventy-five percent of Planned Parenthood patients have incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).

The idea that other providers could absorb Planned Parenthood's patients has been resoundingly dismissed by experts.

In fact, the American Public Health Association called the idea "ludicrous."

Planned Parenthood health centers are also considerably more likely to offer Title X patients a broader range of contraceptive methods than other providers.

In a study of Community Health Centers (CHCs), among CHCs that reported an independent family planning clinic in their largest site's community, 69 percent reported referring their patients to providers specializing in reproductive health services, like Planned Parenthood health centers, for family planning care.

H.J. Res. 43 is a blatant effort to embolden states to try to block women from getting birth control and other preventive care at highly qualified family providers.

By issuing this important protection, the Obama Administration made sure that politicians cannot ignore the law and stand in the way of the care that women need.

I urge all Members to vote No on H.J. Res. 43.

Madam Speaker, I include in the Record a letter and article in opposition to this resolution.

FEBRUARY 14, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Majority Leader,
Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES SCHUMER,
Senate Minority Leader,
Washington, DC.
Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR LEADER MCCONNELL, SPEAKER RYAN, LEADER SCHUMER AND LEADER PELOSI: As organizations committed to improving access to health care for all people, the undersigned groups write to strongly oppose H.J. Res. 43 and S.J. Res. 13, legislation to overturn the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) final rules updating the regulations governing the Title X family planning program. This critical rule clarifies and reinforces the longstanding requirement that health care providers may not be excluded from the program for reasons unrelated to their qualifications to perform Title X-funded services.

The Title X family planning program is a vital source of family planning and related preventive care for low-income, uninsured, and young people across the country. Every year, more than 4 million individuals, including LGBTQ people and people living in rural and medically underserved areas, access life-saving care such as birth control, cancer screenings, and testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV at Title X-funded health centers. Title X cannot succeed unless states and other Title X grantees include providers that are optimally qualified to furnish the range of Title X-funded services according to national standards of care. This task becomes all but impossible if experienced, reputable reproductive health care providers are arbitrarily barred from fair consideration.

An increasing number of states have nevertheless tried to block trusted reproductive health care providers from participating in Title X. To date, at least 14 states have taken official action to target and exclude otherwise eligible providers from the program. Other states have threatened to follow suit. Mounting evidence shows that the exclusion of reproductive health care providers from publicly funded health programs harms health outcomes, widens disparities, and erects new barriers to care. When the very providers that are best suited to deliver Title X-funded services are targeted for exclusion based on factors wholly unrelated to the program's objectives, federal health care resources are poorly and inefficiently distributed and care is less likely to reach individuals in need.

Ideological exclusions of trusted, highly qualified providers from federally supported health programs undermine health care access and jeopardize the health of the patients these programs serve. Title X patients deserve the opportunity to obtain high-quality family planning care from the providers that are best equipped to provide it. As such, we strongly support HHS's rule reinforcing that grantees must design their provider networks based on the ability to provide care to Title X patients in an effective manner—not based on the political preferences of state lawmakers.

We strongly urge you to oppose H.J. Res. 43 and S.J. Res. 13, legislation that will overturn this important rule and embolden states to attempt to block women from getting birth control and other preventive care at highly qualified family providers.

Sincerely;

Advocates for Youth; AIDS Foundation of Chicago; AIDS United; American Association of University Women (AAUW); American Civil Liberties Union; American Medical Student Association; American Society for Reproductive Medicine; Anti-Defamation League; Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum; Catholics for Choice; Center for Reproductive Rights; Feminist Majority Foundation; Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.; Human Rights Campaign; Human Rights Watch.

Ibis Reproductive Health; In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda; Institute for Science and Human Values; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; Methodist Federation for Social Action; NARAL Pro-Choice America; National Abortion Federation; National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum; National Center For Lesbian Rights; National Council of Jewish Women; National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association; National Health Law Program; National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health; National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund; National Organization for Women; National Partnership for Women & Families.

National Women's Health Network; National Women's Law Center; People For the American Way; Physicians for Reproductive Health; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Population Connection Action

Fund; Positive Women's Network—USA; Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need; Religious Institute; Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS); The Black Women's Health Imperative; The United Methodist Church, Church and Society; Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation; United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries; URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity; Voices for Progress.

[From Mother Jones, Jan. 31, 2017]

SENATE REPUBLICANS TAKE THE FIRST STEP TO DEFUND PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(By Hannah Levintova)

Leticia Parra, a mother of five scraping by on income from her husband's sporadic construction jobs, relied on the Planned Parenthood clinic in San Carlos, an impoverished town in South Texas, for breast cancer screenings, free birth control pills and pap smears for cervical cancer.

But the clinic closed in October, along with more than a dozen others in the state, after financing for women's health was slashed by two-thirds by the Republican-controlled Legislature.

The cuts, which left many low-income women with inconvenient or costly options, grew out of the effort to eliminate state support for Planned Parenthood. Although the cuts also forced clinics that were not affiliated with the agency to close—and none of them, even the ones run by Planned Parenthood, performed abortions—supporters of the cutbacks said they were motivated by the fight against abortion.

In December, the Department of Health and Human Services finalized a rule that would prohibit states from withholding federal funds—including Title X family planning money—from Planned Parenthood. On Monday afternoon, a Republican senator introduced a bill that would reverse it, along with a second bill that would prohibit Planned Parenthood from receiving any federal funding—including Medicaid.

The bills, from Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), would redirect federal funds away from Planned Parenthood to other health care providers. The Hyde Amendment already prohibits federal funds from being used for most abortions, but this legislation would bar low-income women who rely on Medicaid and Title X funding for subsidized care from obtaining other women's health care services at Planned Parenthood.

''With a pro-life president in the White House and pro-life majorities in the House and Senate, we will continue to work together this year to undo the damage done by the Obama administration,'' wrote Ernst and Rep. Diane Black (R-Tenn.) in an op-ed published in the Washington Examiner on Friday, the day of the annual anti-abortion March for Life.

The text of one of the bills, S. 241, explains that other entities, including ''state and county health departments, community health centers, [and] hospitals,'' will be able to fill women's health care needs, including contraception, STI testing, and cervical and breast cancer screening. Many health experts say other health providers would not be able to absorb Planned Parenthood's patients. An analysis conducted by the Guttmacher Institute, which publishes research on reproductive health, found that in two-thirds of the counties that have a Planned Parenthood center, these centers serve at least half the women seeking publicly funded contraceptive care. In one-fifth of those counties, Planned Parenthood is the only provider offering subsidized contraceptive care.

''If passed, these bills will cause a national health care crisis, leaving millions with nowhere to go for basic care,'' said Dana Singiser, vice president of public policy and government affairs for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, in a statement.

Texas offers an example of what women's health care looks like when Planned Parenthood is excluded from public funding. In 2011, the state stopped state funds from going to Planned Parenthood, leading to numerous clinic closures. Other health centers attempted to step in, but Medicaid contraception claims declined by 35 percent, suggesting that fewer low-income women were obtaining contraceptive care. There was also an increase in childbirths among women receiving Medicaid who'd previously received contraception from Planned Parenthood clinics.

A bill to deny federal funds to Planned Parenthood passed both chambers of Congress last year, but was vetoed by then-President Barack Obama. Trump is likely to sign Ernst's version of this bill should it cross his desk: Throughout his campaign, Trump promised that defunding the women's health care provider would be a priority for his administration.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER).

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise with my Republican colleagues in support of H.J. Res. 43.

Under the Obama administration's last-minute rule change to title X funding, States like Texas are prevented from establishing criteria that would eliminate abortion providers from receiving title X grant money.

States have the right and responsibility to choose the health providers that best provide and serve the needs of their moms and their babies. During my time in the Texas Legislature, we used the Alternatives to Abortion program.

This program provides low-income pregnant women and their babies care items during pregnancy, and it also provides preventing information. It also funds the counseling referral and pregnancy information hotline and the Texas Pregnancy Care Network. Additionally, this program supports groups in maternity homes, provides referrals to community and social service programs like child care, and offers classes on life skills, budgeting, parenting—yes, parenting—stress management, and GED preparation.

□ 1415

Nationally, 13,000 federally qualified health centers and rural health centers provide comprehensive healthcare services to low-income moms and their babies.

In my district, the 14th Congressional District, over 30 clinics are committed to our community, including moms and their babies. These organizations do a terrific job of supporting women, and yes, their babies, too.

We are not cutting funding. We are not cutting care. We are ensuring that Federal health centers have the funds and the support they need to give the women and the babies the care that they deserve.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her efforts to stand up for women and their babies.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank Congresswoman DEGETTE for her tireless leadership in fighting for women's health, for healthy families in general, and for our children.

I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 43. It is no surprise that, once again, congressional Republicans are trying to undermine women's access to health care and basic family planning services.

This ideological crusade—and that is what it is—will hurt those who need help the most, including low-income women, women of color, and young women. It would also deny thousands of families from choosing their provider of choice—and sometimes the only accessible provider—under title X.

Not only is this resolution antiwoman, it is also counterproductive. We know that for every dollar spent on title X family planning, we save more than $7 on Medicaid-related costs. But my Republican colleagues are so determined to take family planning options away from low-income women that they are prepared to put ideological perspectives above public health.

As a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, I, unfortunately, see these attacks on women's health all too well. Last year, Republicans tried to completely eliminate funding for title X.

So don't be fooled. This piece of legislation is not about Planned Parenthood. It is about Members of Congress trying to control women's bodies.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative BLACK for her work on this subject.

I rise today in strong support of H.J. Res. 43, a joint resolution to stop an Obama administration rule that will force States to send taxpayer dollars to abortion providers, including abortion giant Planned Parenthood.

In addition to last year's shocking videos where we heard high-ranking Planned Parenthood officials use jarring language such as doing a less crunchy type of procedure to preserve body parts, we have recently learned in Pennsylvania that Planned Parenthood was using false advertising on its websites.

The Pennsylvania Family Institute recently found that each Planned Parenthood affiliate in Pennsylvania does not provide prenatal services, even though all 27 Planned Parenthood locations in Pennsylvania had listed ''prenatal'' as a service on their website.

After these clinics were called and asked, Do you provide prenatal services, not one had any such services to offer, but they did offer terminations. Planned Parenthood has since removed

the word ''prenatal'' from their booking appointments website.

They should not be receiving one dime of Federal dollars when they are actively attempting to deceive women to get them in the door. Abortion is not health care. Subsidizing the destruction of human life with Federal dollars in the name of family planning is simply unconscionable.

I urge my colleagues to join me in defending the lives of the unborn and support this important joint resolution.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU).

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 43. This bill is another in a long line of attacks on women's health, women's choices, and women's lives.

For 50 years, title X has been the only federally funded program dedicated to providing comprehensive family planning services for low-income patients. Thanks to title X, these women have gained access to services like birth control, STD testing, cancer screenings, counseling, and sex education.

For most of its history, title X has received broad, bipartisan support from Congress. That is because it has helped millions of women and families. But now, Republicans are using this longstanding program to continue their attack on women's health.

Last year, Republicans eliminated title X funding from their budget altogether. This bill is just the latest attempt to do the same thing by putting family planning resources out of reach for poor women across the country. We cannot let this happen. We cannot let healthy pregnancies and healthy families become a luxury reserved only for the wealthy. It must remain a right for all.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER), chair of our Values Action Team.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my unwavering support for the lives of the unborn, to stand in solidarity with the States, and to urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.J. Res. 43.

This resolution does not cut a dime from family planning funding available to States. It simply enables States to direct the funding towards nonabortion ''whole women'' healthcare providers, such as rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers.

It is important to remember that, for every Planned Parenthood clinic, there are 20 federally qualified health centers. Each year, these centers serve over 21 million American women. This is almost eight times the impact of Planned Parenthood clinics.

We know that Federal law requires that federally qualified health centers provide mammograms, prenatal services, and emergency medical services, none of which are offered by Planned Parenthood clinics.

The States were wise to prioritize such quality health care for women with title X funds. Prior to this new, heavy-handed, agenda-driven policy, the States maintained the flexibility to determine grant recipients. This last-minute Obama administration rule effectively nullifies the policy of 13 States that want to prioritize women's health over abortion.

This Obama-era rule could also impair funding for another 10 States that have chosen comprehensive care over abortion-focused clinics like Planned Parenthood. But it gets worse. Of the 13 States impacted by this rule, five States—Tennessee, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Ohio—could lose almost $16 million in title X funding for failing to abide by the rule. This regulation forces these States to forego their title X funding for all of the women in their State.

Today's resolution resolves this encroachment on the States, rolls back this last-minute rule, and restores flexibility to the States so that women can receive the health care they deserve.

I would like to thank Chairman BLACK for her work on this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.J. Res. 43.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, the war on women is escalating and more dangerous with H.J. Res. 43.

Let's not beat around the bush. Let's call this joint resolution what it really is. It is a backdoor attempt to restrict access to a woman's constitutional right to an abortion.

We all know that Federal funding for abortion is already prohibited, but this goes further—much further. It cuts off funding for contraception, screenings, and treatment if a provider also offers abortions paid for with private funds.

Providers either stop doing abortions or they lose the Federal funds they need to keep their doors open to serve their communities. In other words, the supporters of this resolution are willing to sacrifice women's access to basic healthcare services in order to stamp out abortion. It is cruel, it is wrong, and I would say it is discriminatory. When is the last time this body was called upon to cut off access to basic health care for men?

Vote ''no.''

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY).

Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida. Madam Speaker, as one of his final acts in office, President Obama issued a rule requiring that States give title X family planning fund grants to abortion providers like Planned Parenthood.

States have always had the autonomy to distribute these grants to providers that they choose. Obama took that freedom away from States by requiring them to directly fund abortions under the false assertion that this provides women with greater access to health care. That is just not true.

What people seem to forget is that for every 1 Planned Parenthood facility in the United States, there are 20 federally funded community health centers that stand ready and eager to provide health services to women and don't perform abortions.

States should be able to make their own healthcare decisions. By passing this resolution, we return that power to the States.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL), the chair of the Democratic Women's Working Group.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Speaker, for women to thrive in the economic and social opportunities of our Nation, we must have the ability to control our own reproductive lives with full access to healthcare choices.

Now, here we go again: another Republican bill aimed at taking us back to the dark, dangerous days when women were prisoners of their own bodies; back to 50 years ago when Katy, a nurse in Florida, had no access to legal contraception or abortion. She was a mother of two, recently divorced.

Pregnant and unable to responsibly raise another child, she made an appointment on the phone with a nameless person who met her on a lonely street corner in Miami. She blindfolded her, hid her under a rug in a car, and took her to a garage where she had an abortion.

But Katy was one of the lucky ones. She survived. Not so fortunate were the women who threw themselves down stairs or inserted chemicals or coat hangers into their uteruses in order to terminate their pregnancy.

Madam Speaker, we will not go back to those dark, dangerous days.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BANKS), one of our freshman Members.

Mr. BANKS of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for H.J. Res 43, which would overturn the previous administration's title X family planning funding rule.

In December, the Obama administration finalized a misguided rule which dictates that States must send title X family planning grant money to abortion providers. Even more, this rule also threatens to deprive noncompliant States, such as Representative BLACK's home State of Tennessee, of all title X family planning funds.

This politically motivated requirement was made neither in the interest of protecting life, nor in the interest of the States.

Under the rule, States that decline to send title X funds to abortion clinics

would lose their title X funding completely. If States make the decision they want to use their funding to affirm life, then they should be allowed to do so. This rule blatantly steps all over states' rights and goes out of its way to favor abortion providers at the same time.

Let's ensure States continue to have the freedom and flexibility to make the right decisions for themselves. That is exactly what I have advocated for my entire career, both in the Statehouse in Indiana and again here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

I express my strong support for the passage of H.J. Res. 43, introduced by Representative BLACK.

□ 1430

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Colorado has 15 minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from Tennessee has 8 minutes remaining.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Washington State (Ms. JAYAPAL).

Ms. JAYAPAL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution. For many people, particularly women, title X funding literally means the difference between receiving reproductive health care or being forced to go without birth control, critical cancer screenings, and other preventive care.

For the 4 in 10 women who access health care at title X-funded providers, cutting this funding would mean cutting their access to health care altogether. For people of color, rural communities, and those who struggle to make ends meet, cutting title X funds will certainly have a disproportionate impact.

Let's be very clear that these funds are not controversial, but the Republican majority in Congress and anti-choice groups are doing their best to create a false narrative in order to demonize this funding, which has done nothing but improve the lives of millions of people. Cutting this funding would actually increase the number of unwanted pregnancies by nearly 1 million in just a year alone and would increase abortions by 33 percent.

Women need title X so they can continue to make decisions with their doctors. It is 2017, and a woman's uterus is not a political football.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I must, once again, talk about what this resolution really does. This resolution empowers States. It empowers States that are able to choose to invest in women's health care over abortion by sending those title X dollars to clinics that do not destroy innocent life. My colleagues on the other side talked about how this is destructive to women's health. I want to just mention that the true destruction to women's health is abortion. That is the little girl who is aborted that will never know about being a woman.

This bill does nothing to prohibit States from deciding where to best use their dollars, but in States such as mine in Tennessee for the last 6 years, who have made that decision to send their dollars to facilities that they believe give the best women's health care, comprehensive health care, to over 75,000 women in our State, more than many States that surround us that have larger populations.

If this were prohibiting women from getting services, we wouldn't be so successful with providing services to more than 75,000 women in our State. We haven't seen a decrease in services. We have seen an increase in services. If you were to ask these women what they thought about services that they are getting in these other facilities such as Department of Health and federally qualified health centers, you would see they are very satisfied because they get comprehensive services that go beyond what places like Planned Parenthood can even provide for them. They do mammograms, they do procedures if there are cancer cells found in a woman's cervix.

So this whole ruse that this is a war on women and that we are taking away women's right to healthcare services is a ruse. All this does is to say, if a State like Tennessee decides this is the best place to give the best quality of care for a woman, and hopefully their babies and their children—which, if you go to these clinics, you will see them all running around, they have life—it just gives them the choice to do that.

Don't take away that choice from my State. Don't punish my State because we do what we believe is the best thing for women's health.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA).

Mr. BERA. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her leadership on this subject.

I am a doctor, and I have worked in low-income and free clinics, and I know title X funding works. It has impact. Here is how we also know it works: by expanding access to full reproductive services under the Affordable Care Act and contraception, we have seen a dramatic reduction in the number of unintended pregnancies.

We are debating the wrong thing here. We should be increasing title X funds right now. We should be debating how we make access to full reproductive services more readily available. That is what the women of America want.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this dangerous bill. I urge my colleagues to understand the women of America are watching.

I also urge, if somehow this makes it to the President's desk: The mothers and daughters, Mr. President, are watching; so be careful here. This is about preserving access to care and full reproductive rights. We are watching.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE).

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, title X family planning services are an essential lifeline for Mainers who need access to high-quality preventive and reproductive care, from cancer screenings to STI testings, to birth control. The resolution we are debating today threatens access to these critical services.

Every year, Maine's network of title X providers serves more than 22,000 individuals in nearly every county, including some of the most rural and underserved communities in our State. Sixty-five percent of last year's patients had outcomes that qualified them for free or reduced-cost services.

Family planning health centers often end up being their patients' primary source of health care. Providers are trusted members of the community. The care they deliver is high quality, and often they are the only affordable local option. Without title X funds, thousands of women and men throughout Maine would struggle to access and afford alternative primary care.

At a time when Republicans want to repeal the Affordable Care Act without a replacement plan, it is more important than ever to preserve title X as a cornerstone of our safety-net healthcare system.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend for her incredible leadership on this issue.

Rather than working across the aisle with Democrats to grow our economy, to rebuild older communities, to create new jobs, Republicans are, again, focused on attacking women's health, undermining healthcare programs that provide preventive care for over 4 million Americans, many low-income women who would otherwise be uninsured.

Eliminating this rule makes it harder for women and families to have access to lifesaving cancer screenings, for example, birth control, and other vital health services. These funds are providing necessary health services, Madam Speaker, and everyone in this debate knows what this is about. These dollars do not support abortion. We know Federal law prohibits these dollars from being used for that purpose, but to hear our friends on the other side, they would imply that is the case.

Now, there is and should be a legitimate debate on that subject, but it has been the law and it continues to be the law that these dollars are not used for abortion services. This is about health care. This is about lifesaving health

care for women, and it ought to be preserved.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 43, yet another partisan attack against women's health care.

For more than four decades, title X has helped some of the most underserved women in our country get access to family planning services that otherwise would not have been received.

Once again, some of my colleagues believe that they have the right to impose their beliefs on a nonpartisan issue. Instead of allowing women to choose family planning services that are right for them, this Chamber is voting to take that choice away. Instead of attacking legitimate title X qualified providers who serve women across our country, our Chamber should be working to ensure that all Americans have the right to quality health care.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to stop this attack on women's health care. I urge my colleagues to defeat this resolution.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that the other side is reserving its time to close. Is that correct?

Mrs. BLACK. That is correct.

Ms. DEGETTE. I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK).

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Colorado for all her leadership.

We are barely 6 weeks into this new Congress and the Republicans are back at it again, attacking comprehensive health care for American women. The regulation under attack says that in order to be awarded title X funding, you must be able to deliver the services. Those services are family planning and related preventative health services.

The majority is correct, we are not talking about abortion because abortion is not funded by title X.

Why would Republicans oppose this regulation?

Because it allows them a backdoor way to make funding decisions based on ideology, not quality of care.

Don't we want the best health outcomes for the over 4 million patients who benefited last year from HIV tests, breast exams, and contraception coverage under title X?

Title X-funded healthcare providers around this country are high-quality professionals who provide needed care for millions of families, many of whom are underserved. I oppose this resolution.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, this is not a women's issue or a men's issue. It is an issue for what is right. People have a right to make health choices. If someone doesn't believe in abortion, then make that choice for yourself. If someone believes in something else, then they have the right to make that choice. So eligibility for title X funding should be based on a provider's ability to provide family planning services, period. Whether a provider offers safe and legal abortions with private funds should not be used to prevent women and men from getting preventive care like cancer screenings or HIV tests. That is all the rule requires.

It should not be controversial. Yet, here we are.

What effect would this Congressional Review Act have?

Well, Kansas has given us an ominous preview. When Kansas defunded providers that offered abortion services, the number of Kansans accessing cancer screenings, STI tests, and other care through the title X program plummeted by thousands. A vote for this CRA is a vote to multiply that number.

The Americans who will be affected by this CRA will lose the opportunity to see the provider of their choice, sometimes the only viable provider.

Why would we want to put women—why would we want to put anybody in that category, where they cannot see the only viable provider because someone else doesn't like what the doctor can do?

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.'' My Republican friends always talk about individual freedom and how important it is. This is an individual freedom of a woman's right to control her own body and to make personal choices on health care. We should not interfere with that. We should allow the most and the best health care to be available to all people. I urge a ''no'' vote.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, Republicans are continuing their crusade to cut off access to comprehensive family planning services. Last year they tried to zero out title X in their budget. This year they intend to repeal ACA's cost-free contraception coverage for women with private insurance. Today Republicans are attempting to stop the flow of title X grants to health centers around the country.

Title X grants ensure that low-income families have access to birth control and can plan their pregnancies so that moms and kids stay healthy. Research has shown that without these vital services, the unintended pregnancy rate would be 33 percent higher and the number of abortions would also be higher. My anti-choice Republican colleagues should cheer this program, but instead not only are Republicans trying to defund Planned Parenthood so they won't be able to provide contraception help, but now we are hypocritically rolling back a rule that allows title X funds to flow to reproductive health centers, which are the most effective providers of title X services and which we were told would provide the contraception and other health services that Planned Parenthood no longer would be able to.

□ 1445

Women are watching us today. They know that this joint resolution is nothing more than another attempt to stop low-income women from accessing the health care they need and to allow the government to once again step between women and their doctors.

It is no secret I support a woman's constitutional right to access abortion; but even if you don't and are committed to reducing abortion in this country, you should step up to the plate and support comprehensive and robust family planning for all women. This joint resolution should do the opposite. We should all support contraception for the women of this country.

I urge my colleagues to reject this joint resolution.

Ms. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, well, here we are again, considering legislation that would harm women and families.

Let's be clear: House Republicans do not support family planning title X. For years, Republicans have tried to completely eliminate funding for title X through the appropriations process. So think about that. We are debating contraception in 2017—astonishing.

Title X provides millions of low- and middle-income men and women with access to reproductive healthcare services. The joint resolution we are voting on today would allow States to discriminate against title X providers who perform abortion with non-Federal funds by removing them from the program, leaving patients with few options for the care they need.

Again, let's be clear. If you want to reduce the number of abortions, you need to ensure everyone has access to family planning. Teen pregnancy and the rate of abortion are at historic lows because we have worked to make contraception more affordable and accessible.

For over 60 percent of title X patients, the clinics they visit for family planning services are their only regular source of care, and yet we are considering legislation that would result in clinic closures and would prevent men and women from seeing trusted providers in their own communities.

Do Republicans oppose cancer screening for cervical breast cancer? Do they oppose STI testing? Do they oppose contraception? The answer seems to be yes because Republicans continue to

ignore these facts in their effort to harm women's health.

I urge my colleagues to put an end to the war on women and to oppose this very dangerous legislation.

Ms. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, we hear today this really isn't about denying women and families access to family planning and birth control because States would just simply take that title X money and put it somewhere else. Unfortunately, this seems to be a bit of magical thinking. Even the Congressional Budget Office said that as many as 390,000 women would lose access to care and 650,000 women would have reduced access if legislation like this passed.

The fact of the matter is you can't simply shift all of these people from title X family planning centers like Planned Parenthood to community health centers, as the other side asserts. For one thing, 69 percent of the community health centers actually refer patients to family planning providers like Planned Parenthood, and only 19 percent of community health centers report that their largest sites both prescribe and dispense all types of contraceptive methods. Only half of community health centers that received title X funding provide IUDs and other types of long-acting birth control, the most effective type of birth control, so you can't just shift everybody else someplace else.

In fact, the National Association of Community Health Centers itself said that they could not treat all of the patients that Planned Parenthood now has if this legislation went through. Let's just call this joint resolution what it is. It is an attempt to take away important family planning resources from the women and families of America.

Now, I think if we all support title X when the annual appropriations bill comes up this year, I would ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to please join me and my colleagues in an effort to increase title X funding. In all the years I have been in Congress, I have seen attempt after attempt not only to reduce abortion availability, but also to stop family planning services. I think that is something we could agree with on, and I think we could do that.

So in the meantime, let's make sure that the women of America can get access to the family planning they need, and let's continue to give family planning money to all of these interests to do that.

Again, I would like to reiterate, we have no family funding for abortions. That is the law. I don't like the law, but that is the law. We are talking about family planning and title X. That needs to be preserved and enhanced. Vote ''no'' on this joint resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I include in the RECORD letters from March for Life Action, Christian Medical and Dental Associations, and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

MARCH FOR LIFE ACTION,
Washington, DC, February 15, 2017.

REPRESENTATIVE,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of March for Life Action and the hundreds of thousands of our supporters and fellow marchers, I urge you to vote in favor of H.J. Res. 43., sponsored by Rep. Diane Black (R–TN). When H.J. Res. 43 comes to the House floor for a vote we will be scoring the vote in our annual scorecard for the First Session of the 115th Congress.

In the waning days of his Administration President Barack Obama, using his power at Health and Human Services, issued a rule that locked down federal grants for abortion-giant Planned Parenthood but also usurped state's rights by blocking states seeking to defund the abortion industry and redirect funds to county health departments, community health centers and other clinics that put women's health above an abortion agenda.

H.J. Res. 43 does not reduce funds for family planning, but allows states to assure that taxpayer funds do not support or underwrite abortion providers when so many Americans have ethical reservations about this procedure. The time has come for a clean break between government support of family planning activities and abortion.

Again, on behalf of March for Life Action, I strongly encourage your vote for H.J. Res. 43. March for Life Action will score this vote in our annual scorecard.

Sincerely,

THOMAS MCCLUSKY,
Vice President of Government Affairs.

CHRISTIAN MEDICAL & DENTAL ASSOCIATIONS,
Bristol, TN, January 16, 2017.

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

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: Thank you for your strong, principled and common-sense leadership on the issue of preventing American tax dollars from funding abortion on demand. Thank you also for your commitment to providing healthcare access to the poor and other vulnerable patients in need.

On behalf of the over 18,000 members of the Christian Medical Association, we urge you to:

1. ensure the reallocation of funding currently used by abortion-performing, partisan political organizations such as Planned Parenthood, by directing that funding instead to the over 13,000 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs); and,

2. overturn, through the Congressional Review Act, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) rule finalized December 19, 2016, titled ''Compliance with Title X Requirements by Project Recipients in Selecting Subrecipients,'' in order to ensure that states are allowed to take a similar direction in allocating federal funding.

Many of our members serve in federally funded centers that focus on providing care to patients regardless of who the patient is or what the patient's values, orientation, ethnicity or any other qualities may be. As you know well, needy patients depend on these centers and on physicians like our members to provide healthcare when likely no one else would provide healthcare for them. FQHCs provide comprehensive services and a ''medical home'' for whole families and work in the areas of most critical need.

According to the independent government watchdog GAO in 2012, FQHCs served 21 million individuals and provided services including STD testing, cancer screening and contraceptive management, as well as other services including immunizations and general child wellness exams. FQHCs and RHCs often meet patient needs on modest budgets, and those who serve in these centers often do so at great personal financial sacrifice. Unlike Planned Parenthood, which follows an aggressive business plan designed to maximize profits on services such as abortion, these centers exist for the purpose of serving the nation's most needy patients.

Yet some medical groups like the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, whose pro-abortion ideology aligns with Planned Parenthood and whose members profit personally from working with Planned Parenthood, decry ''political interference in the patient-physician relationship.'' This cry comes, oddly enough, while applying pressure on politicians to fund political groups like Planned Parenthood. It is also worth observing what sources such as the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics and PolitiFact National have confirmed—that Planned Parenthood spends millions of dollars each year for one partisan purpose: to elect Democrats and defeat Republicans.

It's hard to get more political than that, and it's impossible to get more politically partisan than that.

The majority of Americans do not want their tax dollars to subsidize abortion, and they certainly do not want their tax dollars to subsidize an abortion-performing partisan political machine. Because of the strong concern of American taxpayers, existing federal law addresses direct funding of abortion. However, the fungible nature of federal grants to Planned Parenthood means that every American's tax dollars, regardless of their convictions about abortion, are being used to prop up the abortion industry.

Any organization that wishes to avoid political entanglement can do so quite easily—by simply foregoing government funding. Those who seek funding should expect federal and/or state oversight, requirements and standards.

Even the most modest of standards should disqualify from federal funding organizations such as Planned Parenthood, given the recent findings of the Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives, the list of 15 criminal and regulatory referrals made by the Panel, and the referral by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to the FBI and the Department of Justice for investigation and potential prosecution.

If any organization can and should do without federal funding, the billion-dollar, corrupt abortion business Planned Parenthood is a prime example.

We respectfully urge you to reallocate American tax dollars away from such profit-centered, divisive and partisan organizations and provide funding instead to patient-centered, non-controversial and nonpartisan Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs). And we urge you to ensure that states can do the same, applying reasonable state standards and requirements to those who seek to use taxpayer funds. Thank you very much for your consideration of these views, and for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

DAVID STEVENS, *MD, MA (Ethics) CEO.*

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, SECRETARIAT OF PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES,

Washington, DC, February 14, 2017.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: I write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities to urge your support for H.J. Res 43. This resolution of disapproval would nullify former President Obama's final rule relating to compliance with Title X requirements by project recipients. 81 Fed. Reg. 91852 (Dec. 19, 2016). The stated purpose of this rule change is to prevent states from excluding providers such as Planned Parenthood from sub-awards based on state criteria, such as a requirement that sub-recipients provide comprehensive primary and preventive care in addition to family planning services.

The Title X rule change is bad public policy and should be nullified for several reasons. First, it is deeply troubling to many Americans that Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion network (performing over a third of all abortions), receives more than half a billion taxpayer dollars per year. This concern has rightly grown with revelations about Planned Parenthood's willingness to traffic in fetal tissue from abortions, and to alter abortion methods not for any reason related to women's health but to obtain more ''intact'' organs. Additionally, a recent revelation that the vast majority of Planned Parenthood facilities do not provide prenatal services provides additional evidence of its bias toward providing and promoting abortion.

Second, the Department of Health and Human Service's stated objective in preventing states from ensuring the seamless delivery of comprehensive care places the Department in a self-contradictory position. Last year in the Nation's highest court, HHS touted the seamless coverage of health services as a virtue. Indeed, the Department argued that seamlessness is a government interest of the highest order, sufficient to outweigh constitutionally and statutorily protected religious objections.

In this new rule, however, HHS takes the opposite position, saying that the seamless provision of services is an ill to be avoided. The present rule would ensure that the provision of care is fragmented, rather than seamless, because it would undermine state requirements that sub-recipients provide primary and preventive care in addition to family planning. Seamlessness cannot at one and the same time be a government interest of the highest order when it disadvantages religious organizations, but an affirmative ill to be avoided when it disadvantages Planned Parenthood.

Third, states may have other reasonable and persuasive grounds for disqualifying entities from sub-awards that go beyond the ability of such entities to ''provide Title X services'' as the rule states (81 Fed. Reg. at 91860). For example, a sub-award applicant may have been involved in fraudulent practices, or the applicant or its stakeholders may even have committed a crime, bearing on the applicant's fitness and suitability for a sub-award. Indeed, the requirements for federal awards and sub-awards in general are typically accompanied by all sorts of standards, many of which are imposed by the federal government itself, and those standards often have little or nothing to do with the ability to provide services (governmental guidelines are replete with such requirements). States may also have widely differing standards for sub-awardees based on the states' own policy judgment. Therefore, it should be permissible for states to decline to make a sub-award when the sub-awardee does not meet applicable criteria, whether federal or state, even if the entity is, strictly speaking, able to ''provide Title X services.'' Those criteria, of course, themselves remain subject to applicable federal and state law.

For each of these reasons, we urge you to support H.J. Res. 43.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN,
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, the 10th Amendment of the Constitution reads pretty clearly to me: ''The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.''

I understand that there is a diversity of views represented in this Chamber on matters of health care and human life. I am not asking my colleagues to set those views aside with this vote. I am simply asking them not to substitute their judgment for the will of the States.

With this resolution, we are letting States care for their citizens the best way they know, just as they have had that ability for the past 45 years, and we are maintaining access to care for women and families.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on this resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.J. Res. 43 which is another baseless and dangerous attack on women's health care providers.

The title X Family Planning Rule, passed almost 50 years ago, already requires states to base title X funding on a provider's ability to provide title X services. This rule protects title X providers from facing unwarranted discrimination and allows them to continue doing the important work 4 million Americans rely on every year. Title X services include family planning services, cancer screenings, birth control, STI testing and basic care. To diminish these services will result in women, men and young people with the greatest need being denied the opportunity to have any health care.

Whether or not a provider provides safe and legal abortions with private funds is irrelevant to their ability and capacity to provide title X services. In fact, it is preventive services and family planning offered through title X programs that help to lower the number of unintended pregnancies. But attacks on these providers and the services they offer in their communities persist.

This resolution rolls back protections that should already be guaranteed, but repeated attacks on family planning providers have resulted in the need for rules like the one this resolution dismantles. That is why I strenuously oppose this resolution. It should be rejected as an unjustified and unnecessary attack on title X programs and the services they provide for millions of low income Americans.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, it's been less than two months since the start of the 115th Congress and Republicans have already taken every opportunity to roll back progress made for women.

They have pledged to tear down the Affordable Care Act and block access to Planned Parenthood.

They passed a bill through the House that limits insurance coverage for comprehensive reproductive healthcare.

Now they've turned their sights to title X, a family planning program that is crucial for women's health.

There are serious consequences for scaling back title X: without the contraceptive services provided at these title X sites, pregnancy rates would be 30 percent higher among teens.

We in government should be making it easier for young people to make smart and informed decisions, not depriving them of the ability to be responsible about their health.

Please, Madam Speaker, think about those young women. Their lives and their health should be a concern to all of us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 123, the previous question is ordered on the joint resolution.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Passing H.J. Res. 69;

Passing H.J. Res. 43; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF FINAL RULE OF DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 69) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to ''Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska'', on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 225, nays 193, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 98]

YEAS—225

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Cuellar
Culberson
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kind
King (IA)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—193

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
King (NY)
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
McSally
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Upton
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Amodei
Barton
Bass
Bishop (GA)
Butterfield
Curbelo (FL)
Olson
Richmond
Rush
Stewart
Trott
Zinke

□ 1516

Messrs. WALZ and REICHERT changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

So the joint resolution was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF FINAL RULE BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 43) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients, on which a recorded vote was ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 230, noes 188, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 99]

AYES—230

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Crawford
Culberson
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Farenthold
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—188

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)

Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Faso
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Amodei
Barton
Bass
Bishop (GA)
Butterfield
Cramer
Curbelo (FL)
Richmond
Rush
Stewart
Trott
Zinke

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1527

So the joint resolution was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes due to a family obligation. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 98 and "yea" on rollcall No. 99.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH). The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

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

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

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 3003, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe:

Ms. JACKSON LEE, Texas

Ms. MOORE, Wisconsin

□ 1530

DISMANTLING THE WOTUS RULE

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, waters of the United States, or WOTUS, has been a thorn in the side of Americans, especially our farmers, since its introduction. WOTUS is a rule issued under the Clean Water Act by the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers designed to redefine the scope of waters protected and regulated by the Federal Government.

WOTUS would grant the Federal Government regulatory power over virtually any place where water flows in the United States; that includes ditches, puddles, streams, or any man-made constructions, you name it. If enacted, it would undermine the rights of States, local governments and landowners, and create more red tape, preventing economic growth and jobs, particularly in the agriculture industry. If it sounds ridiculous, that is because it is.

WOTUS was flawed from the beginning. It has been held up in the courts since 2015.

To ensure WOTUS never sees the light of day and completely eliminate the potential of it becoming a reality, I introduced legislation to repeal this harmful rule.

I look forward to working with President Trump and my colleagues on this very important issue.

CERBERUS CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, before President Trump and Steve Bannon bring in a Wall Street billionaire to delve into our Nation's most classified intelligence, the American people have a right to know the facts about who he and his firm are.

If you believe in the United States military, as I do, and not simply cashing it out to private guns for hire, then we would best pay attention to Stephen Feinberg, CEO of Cerberus, who is to be tasked with leading a review of our U.S. intelligence agencies.

Cerberus also owns DynCorp, which is in a legal dispute over a $10 billion State Department contract for operations in foreign countries.

The Director of Homeland Security, retired General Kelly, received $166,000 as an adviser to DynCorp prior to his Cabinet appointment. Simply put, Cerberus profits off the privatization of war.

Handing the keys to our intelligence agencies over to Wall Street is dangerous. Privatization of our homeland security and Armed Forces jeopardizes our national security. It is critical we stand together, take action to demand transparency, prevail for the sake of future generations, and prevent the siphoning of funds intended for our military.

Before any Wall Street speculator sets foot on our Nation's most precious security turf, the American people and our military need complete disclosure and divestiture of all Cerberus' and Mr. Feinberg's holdings.

PARKING DRIVE-BY LAWSUITS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Weingarten Realty owns several shopping centers in Texas. Recently they were sued by plaintiffs who had never visited the shopping center.

The complaint?

Allegedly, nine designated ADA van-accessible parking spaces were not dispersed far enough apart.

The plaintiff did not notify Weingarten of the alleged violations before filing the lawsuit, so Weingarten couldn't comply.

The real estate company believes they were in compliance with the ADA. But often companies like Weingarten decide the best economic decision is to settle the lawsuit rather than an expensive court trial. Businesses are told to either pay a settlement or face an expensive trial.

The bipartisan bill, the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017, requires plaintiffs to give businesses notice and time to fix the alleged ADA infraction before a lawsuit is filed.

Mr. Speaker, the ADA was designed to improve access for the disabled, not allow a handful of greedy plaintiffs who have never been on the premises to use a loophole to extort unsuspecting businessowners of money.

And that is just the way it is.

THE WIDENING FLYNN SCANDAL

(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, are we witnessing the first Manchurian presidency in the history of the United States?

This resignation of President Trump's National Security Adviser, Michael Flynn, has done nothing to end the controversy surrounding the administration's relationship with Russia. I am calling for an independent investigation into Flynn's actions.

The White House knew for weeks that Flynn misled about his secret communications with the Russian Ambassador, but apparently that was not a problem for the Trump administration as long as it was hidden from the public.

Did the White House authorize Flynn's secret communications? Did the President? Why wasn't Flynn gone sooner?

We don't know yet the answers to these and other questions. What we do know is that the Trump administration is not prepared to protect this Nation.

For all their talk of national security, Republicans are giving President Trump a pass. An independent investigation into Flynn's actions is needed. The investigation must determine if improper relationships between the Trump administration and the Russian Government exist.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are demanding to know, and they deserve to know just how tight Russia's grip is on the Trump administration.

CUT BUREAUCRACY OUT OF THE CASEWORK PROCESS

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 512, the WINGMAN Act. The WINGMAN Act will help Members of Congress and our staff members better assist the constituents that we serve. It cuts bureaucracy out of the casework process, and it makes it easier to connect Pennsylvania families with the services and benefits that they need.

Our staff members in our district do tremendous work every day. They help constituents and their families navigate the Federal bureaucracy, whether it is helping veterans obtain care through the VA, seniors access their Medicare or Social Security benefits, or even helping a traveler obtain a passport for an emergency trip overseas. Too often that work goes unsung and the hard work they do goes unrecognized.

I am blessed to have a terrific staff in my district office, led by my district chief of staff, Caitlin Ganley. Our team, Bill Dondero, Maureen Quinn, Alaina Sforza, and Brian Gallie have helped literally thousands of individuals as we have worked to cut through the red tape and get the answers they need from the agencies across the Federal Government. The WINGMAN Act will make this difficult job just a little bit easier, and I am proud to support it.

WHAT IS THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, after only 24 days in office, President Trump's National Security Adviser, Michael Flynn, resigned in disgrace.

Why?

He had direct contact with the Russian Ambassador, assuring him, in likely violation of U.S. law, that the Obama sanctions against Russia would be reversed. And then he lied about it.

There is evidence of Trump campaign officials having regular contact with Russians officials, and we know Russia hacked into DNC files and doled out stolen information with the goal of aiding the Trump campaign.

So the question is: What is the Russian connection?

Congress must do its job. We should conduct a full-scale, no-holds-barred investigation of the links between the Trump campaign and Russian officials. There is a mountain of evidence we cannot ignore.

The American people have a right to know, of course. But even more importantly, the enduring strength of our democracy is being tested. Congress must maintain our constitutional protection of checks and balances. Investigate now. Investigate fully.

THE STATUS QUO IS UNSUSTAINABLE

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, we have seen more troubling signs this week that things continue to get worse under the healthcare law.

Humana announced they are dropping out of the ObamaCare marketplace next year. The CEO of Aetna said that ObamaCare is in a ''death spiral.''

Families in Michigan and across the country are left with fewer choices and soaring costs. Mari, from Jackson, in my district, is one of them. Her premiums nearly quadrupled last year under ObamaCare; and this year, her premiums went up so high, she could not afford to pay them. So she and her husband, who is self-employed, dropped the plan and now are going without any health insurance at all.

The status quo is simply unsustainable, and we are working to provide relief to families who are struggling. This will be an orderly, step-by-step process as we transition to patient-centered solutions that lower costs, increase choices, maintain preexisting conditions coverage, and meet the needs of all Americans. That is what Mari and every single American deserves.

TITLE X FUNDING FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today deeply disappointed that the House has again put attacking women's health over the important priorities the American people sent us here to address.

More than 4 million individuals across the country, many of them low-income, uninsured, or young, depend on title X for family planning and related preventative care. This is lifesaving care: birth control, HIV and other STI testing, and cancer screenings, to name a few.

The resolution that passed today allows States to deny trusted reproductive healthcare providers from receiving title X funds for purely ideological reasons. Already, 14 States have taken official action to exclude Planned Parenthood and other critical reproductive healthcare providers from serving patients through the title X program.

This shameful legislation puts politics ahead of women's health and does a disservice to women and families across our Nation.

WHY THE MEDIA ATTACKS PRESIDENT TRUMP

(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, it is no surprise that the media's credibility has hit a record low with the American people, according to a recent Gallup Poll.

The media attacked President Trump because he proved their predictions wrong and their candidate lost. They attack him because they are mostly liberal Democrats and he is a conservative Republican. They attack him because he is reversing many of the policies of President Obama, whom they openly supported. They attack him because he is going around them, directly to the American people with his Twitter messages. They attack him because they can't intimidate or control him.

The media's hate is poisoning the country.

Wouldn't it be better for our country if the media gave the American people the facts rather than told them what to think?

Wouldn't it be better for our country if the media treated the President fairly and without malice?

WHEN WILL CONGRESS FINALLY ACT

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, CNN reported that the Pentagon is considering a proposal to send U.S. ground troops to northern Syria. This is for a report to President Trump on the war against ISIS due this month.

But the very idea that the Pentagon is seriously considering sending more troops into Syria should be a wake-up call to Congress and to all Americans. Three years after the U.S. first sent troops to Syria and Iraq, Congress still hasn't voted to authorize the fight against ISIS.

Do we really want to send more Americans into war? What is the mission? How does it end?

For 3 years, Congress has failed to do its constitutional duty. Three years of cowardice. Three years of a blank check.

Speaker RYAN promised action in 2016, but did nothing.

When, Mr. Speaker, will this House finally do its job? After 100 more American troops are sent to Syria and Iraq? Five hundred more? A thousand? When will Congress finally act?

Mr. Speaker, I say the time is now.

□ 1545

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF TIM PRENDIVILLE

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

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the life of Tim Prendiville, an active member of Tucson's Irish community and dear friend of my family and mine who sadly passed away on February 14.

Tim dedicated his life to giving back to others. For example, he organized meals and bought sleeping bags for the homeless at Armory Park, and he donated his time to help those who could not read or write send letters to their loved ones.

He was a founding member of Tucson's St. Patrick's Day committee and was honored last year as grand marshal of the annual parade.

He was a gifted storyteller, a reflection of his Irish roots. One of his favorites was the time he sang ''Oh Danny Boy'' at a dinner with then-Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy.

I've known Tim ever since I was a young child. When I was 12, he delivered the eulogy at my father's funeral. Throughout my life, he has been a constant source of encouragement, and, although we belonged to different political parties, he was somebody who shared widely his faith and belief in me.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply grateful for Tim Prendiville's love and support. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and loved ones in our time of grief. I know he is now singing ''Oh Danny Boy'' with the angels.

APPLAUDING THE OSCAR DE LE RENTA POSTAGE STAMP

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the United States Postal Service for its dedication of the Oscar de la Renta postage stamp. This stamp was unveiled today at Grand Central Station in New York City in a wonderful ceremony, and it is part of the U.S. Postal Service's Forever collection.

As a lifelong friend, I dearly miss Oscar de la Renta and care about honoring his work and his memory.

To me and so many Americans, particularly immigrants, he was more than just a designer, he was a good friend and a pioneer. As a member of the Dominican-American community and as a member of the U.S. Congress, it is my goal to highlight the achievement of immigrants who have contributed to American society and culture.

Though Oscar was highly regarded by some of the most prominent figures of our time, including first ladies, he maintained his humility and never cast aside those who were less fortunate.

His creativity, resourcefulness, and love for life are admirable characteristics that made him a true national treasure. Oscar was widely known for his love of country and deep affection for the Dominican-American community.

I am proud to see Oscar's legacy honored and hope to keep his memory alive. Oscar is still with us. Once someone asked him how he wanted to be remembered, and he simply said: As a pretty dress.

LAUDING MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIPS

(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 to speak about the important role the Manufacturing Extension Partnership plays in strengthening U.S. manufacturing. This public-private partnership consists of a nationwide system of centers located throughout the United States.

Manufacturers can receive several services by visiting a designated MEP center, including workforce development, supply chain development, commercialization, exporting, and many other helpful strategies.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Innovative Manufacturers' Center in my home district. The IMC works to increase the innovation, productivity, and growth for manufacturers in central Pennsylvania. Over the past 25 years, IMC has helped more than 600 manufacturing companies in its 12-county region of the Keystone State.

Mr. Speaker, American manufacturing is a critical part of our economy. I am pleased to see that public-private partnership is working to help support small and midsized manufacturers.

These are the businesses that employ our neighbors and produce quality made in America products. I look forward to seeing their continued growth, and I salute the centers nationwide that help them do just that.

THANKING ATTORNEY GENERAL XAVIER BECERRA

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate California's new attorney general, my friend, Xavier Becerra.

As many of you know, former Congressman Becerra was the Congressional Hispanic Caucus chair from 1997 to 1999. He was our Democratic Caucus vice chair from 2009 to 2013, and also our Democratic Caucus chair for the 114th Congress.

We all know that Attorney General Becerra was a staunch defender of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, and other support for people in need. He was also a supporter for our DREAMers, for DACA, and for women's rights. He was also a mentor to me. Aspiring new Members who came here looked to him for advice, especially in their first couple weeks here.

I want to thank Attorney General Becerra for coming to a roundtable in my district over in Polk County to visit with so many of our agricultural workers in our community and so many DREAMers. It is so critical for agriculture, for our farmers, and for rural America that we continue to make sure that agriculture continues to be strong in our Nation. As a Californian, he also even starred in Stephen Colbert's ''Better Know a District.''

So I just want to thank, once again, Congressman Xavier Becerra for being an American Member of Congress, someone who looked out for all of us and defended our values.

COAL REFUSE-TO-ENERGY LEGISLATION

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the progress hard-working western Pennsylvanians have made in restoring our hillsides and streams in historic mining communities polluted by waste coal.

Through the use of innovative technology, workers in the coal refuse-to-

energy industry have brought about an incredible transformation of formerly polluted areas, restoring landscapes to their original natural beauty.

It is a success story all around, both environmentally and economically. Unfortunately, one-size-fits-all Washington regulations threaten to stop this success story in its tracks and to destroy the family-sustaining jobs the coal refuse-to-energy industry supports.

That is why, for the third time, I am reintroducing the Satisfying Energy Needs and Saving the Environment, or SENSE Act, in the 115th Congress as H.R. 1119.

My legislation ensures that regulations are tailored to allow a very specific and small subset of power plants to continue their remediation efforts and restore western Pennsylvania's natural beauty, as well as landscapes in historic mining communities across the country.

This legislation passed the House with bipartisan support last year, and I urge my colleagues to support it once again so that the vital and successful work of providing electricity while cleaning up the environment can continue.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT SAVES LIVES

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, from the mother of four with a preexisting condition to the family of a young boy who can now afford health insurance for the first time—we have heard constantly and over and over how the Affordable Care Act has saved lives. The Affordable Care Act provides quality, affordable insurance to millions of Americans.

For example, just in my district alone, nearly 100,000 people who are now covered through the Covered California exchange or through the Medicaid—which is in California Medi-Cal—expansion, they stand to lose coverage if the Affordable Care Act is repealed.

It is completely irresponsible to speak about repealing the Affordable Care Act with no replacement. I urge my colleagues to think about their own constituents before doing so.

THE THIRTY MILLION WORDS INITIATIVE

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

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a truly innovative pilot program in my district in Pensacola, Florida. This one-of-a-kind program, known as the Thirty Million Words Initiative, is a collaborative effort brought by researchers from the University of Chicago in partnership with the Studer Community Institute.

The Thirty Million Words Initiative will educate parents of newborns at Sacred Heart Hospital, Baptist Hospital, and West Florida Hospital on best practices for speech and engagement during the critical learning stage up to 3 years old.

As we all know, interaction by speech or music with young children has not only had an impact on learning abilities but also emotional needs. This program builds on this principle and strives to include all newborns, regardless of income level, race, or ethnicity.

Through this simple commitment, we can challenge the socioeconomic stereotypes we have become too used to and build a future for leaders and innovators stemming from all walks of life and bringing new ideas for a vision for the future.

This truly unique partnership between our community leaders and the parents of our future generation will garner a secure foundation for our children to bring stronger education, allow limitless possibilities, and meeting the challenges to build a better tomorrow.

U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, the relationship between the United States and Israel is a very important one, a moral one, and one beneficial to both sides.

I was very glad to see this week the President, so early on in his term, inviting and making welcome Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to this country and showing that the U.S. relation with Israel is as important to us as it is to them.

Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state, through much of its history of this Earth has been a very strong one for their assertion for their rights to be part of the fiber of the Middle East. The United States needs to be on their side and a firm partner in what they need to do.

So, again, kudos to President Trump for making this establishment of this relationship early on in his term and sending that assurance to Prime Minister Netanyahu, the people of Israel, and the importance to the people of this country of that relationship.

LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, this great deliberative body.

To start this off, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa. Perhaps this will embarrass you, my colleague, STEVE KING, but as I was flying into Nebraska last week—and I do this on occasion—I am looking out of the window and looking at the rolling hills of the western edge of Iowa as it borders the Missouri River and all of that beautiful terracing that has been done, all of that extraordinarily productive farmland, in order to save the soil and increase yields, and I wonder how much of that STEVE KING did himself in a former life. So I am grateful not only for the opportunity but mostly for your friendship.

Mr. KING of Iowa. The answer would be a fair amount, and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, as I was going through my mail last week, I read a publication that I receive frequently at my house from what is known as the Great Plains Trail Network. This is a dedicated group of people who enjoy, promote, and foster the growing network of hiking and biking trails in my hometown of Lincoln and the vicinity. They provide an extraordinary service to our community. Most notably, the trail systems provide an alternative means of transportation, physically linking our community in creative ways along creek beds and underpasses, through open plains and wooded areas, and beside the wooden fences between residential neighborhoods. These trails also link us in a more profound way. They link us to the values of healthy exercise, neighborliness, and the beauty of nature—even in the setting of the urban city environment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I received an unusual media request recently. New York Magazine wished to speak to me. I took the meeting because I wanted to give a broader perspective on the issue of environmental stewardship, particularly in light of policy debates about energy and the environment. Since this topic can be so toxic, I thought it was important to reframe the issues with some prairie perspective, if you will. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it is time to spike the football and focus on solutions and activities that all of us can agree on and that all of us see are beneficial.

Mr. Speaker, for the 21st century, we must harmonize environmental and economic security. As a different public policy approach, I am considering a new idea called the zero-emissions energy credit, or ZEEC.

□ 1600

The more that we can do, I believe, to stop waste and pollution through conservation and innovation gives us peace of mind in regards to the proper use of our resources.

This ZEEC concept would reward reduced emissions through a tax credit

system. In this way, the government is not picking one technology over another or fighting over one regulation versus another, but positively valuing the diminishing externality cost of polluting emissions.

Mr. Speaker, environmental initiatives can also take many other forms. I am very proud to be recently named the co-chair of the International Conservation Caucus, called the ICC. It is one of the largest bipartisan caucuses in the Congress.

The ICC works to ensure the sustainability of both persons and wildlife, works to promote market innovation, as well as proper stewardship of our precious natural resources.

As an example, not long ago, in the African country of Mozambique, in the midst of a civil war, the Gorongosa National Park was completely stripped of wildlife and devoid of people. A once lush microecosystem is dead, primarily due to political disagreement.

Interestingly, fascinatingly, extraordinarily, a mere 10 years later, thanks to the work of a major philanthropist and a receptive government, a park system now teams with wildlife, with indigenous people reintegrated back into their homeland, who are engaged in now good and sustainable farming methodologies, engaged in park management, as well as conservation, all creating an atmosphere in which the entire ecosystem once again thrives.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know anyone in this body or anywhere else who wants dirty air or dirty water. However, as another example, if you live in Beijing, polluted air alone costs you 5½ years off your life. Parts of India are perhaps worse.

By the way, the Chinese Government was infuriated with the United States because we created at our embassy a pollution monitoring device, and then publicly released that data to Chinese society. It had a major effect. As one Chinese person once whispered to me: What is the point of all this economic development if it kills you?

Economic development without a soul strips us of the capacity to fully prosper. On the other hand, one of the prime contributors to environmental desecration is economic underdevelopment. Persons who have diminished economic options will use the resources at hand, sometimes merely to survive.

The tragedy of the commons occurs when there are fractured social linkages, a lack of access to technology and information to feed, clothe, and house in a more sustainable way.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this: as new technologies emerge, we may see exciting opportunities to build our own sustainably sourced microenergy economy, one that harmonizes with the environment and creates new economic opportunities and linkages.

This doesn't mean we all live on game preserves, but through proper public policy and innovation, we may be on the trail to environmental, economic, and community security, and perhaps create a new type of Great Plains Energy Network.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Congressman KING, for the various aspects of leadership he has provided, particularly today, on an essential issue: a pro-life issue.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) for his presentation here today, his friendship, and the job he has been doing for a long time representing the eastern third of Nebraska, generally speaking.

I would point out also, Mr. Speaker, that we actually first met on the pro-life issue. As I was looking at the primary candidates that were vying for that position in eastern Nebraska, I wanted to measure their character, the content of their character, the value of their faith and their commitment to principle and planning and Constitution, but especially life. In looking at the candidates, it didn't take very long to figure that out.

I think Nebraskans have done very well with the representation that they have sent to this Congress, especially in the case of Mr. FORTENBERRY, who has exceeded my expectations. And I am pleased to say that here.

As the gentleman indicated, I came to the floor here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to speak about life, about innocent, unborn human life.

To start with, I will put it this way, Mr. Speaker. There are a series of values that we hold dear. Many of the debates here on this floor and in the committees and the various committee rooms around the Hill that we have are more or less working around the edges of the central issue. Sometimes, though, we do get to the central issue. The central issue was debated here on the floor earlier with a different piece of legislation.

When young people are growing up in America and they are listening to their parents, their teachers, other friends and relatives and schoolmates, the question will emerge—and you can't grow up in America without the question of abortion emerging; and sometimes they are counseled on one side of that question and sometimes on the other—but when I am talking to young people, I want them to shape their values around the most solid principles, as our Founding Fathers shaped the values of America around the solid moral principles.

It doesn't do to simply pass off the idea of abortion and say: I am not going to think about it; or I am going to leave it up to God to decide. He calls on us also to contemplate these things.

Our Founding Fathers wrote into the Declaration of Independence that we have a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When I contemplate those words and the order of those words, often it is conflated together as equal or equivalent values as if life and the pursuit of happiness are equivalent values, with liberty in the middle of all that, and you can stir it up and no one's pursuit of happiness should be diminished by someone else's search for liberty or the exercise of their liberty or that no one's life should trump that of someone else's pursuit of happiness or liberty.

Mr. Speaker, in understanding the Declaration of Independence, the foundational document that undergirds our Constitution and the most beautiful document written in the history of the nation-state—and I believe that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were inspired with divine guidance, just a little bit lower standard of true than divine inspiration; a divine guidance—I believe our Founding Fathers thought deeply about that message that was coming to them from above and the words that were put down on that parchment by Thomas Jefferson.

The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were rights that were considered carefully to be prioritized in their order of what was the most important down to the least important of the three. Life came first. They didn't say right to pursuit of happiness, to liberty, to life. They didn't say right to liberty, pursuit of happiness, and then to life. They wrote life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

To understand what that means, think of this. First, the definition of pursuit of happiness is understood by our Founding Fathers. Our Founding Fathers didn't see this pursuit of happiness as let's just say a tailgate party on a Saturday noon or early Saturday afternoon. It wasn't about going off to a party or sitting in your backyard with your family or doing the things we enjoy to do, enjoying sports, watching or participating; or being out on the water or down the ski slopes.

That was not imagined at all as the pursuit of happiness because they understood pursuit of happiness to be the definition of the Greek term that I pronounce eudemonia, pronounced with a Greek accent. But what it means is: in pursuit of happiness.

Happiness under the Greek understanding of the term was the whole person; to develop one's self as the whole person. That would be to develop yourself physically. As you grow into adulthood, keep yourself in shape, build your muscles up, eat healthy, sleep healthy, do the healthy things, make sure that this temple of our body is taken care of and respected and appreciated. That is the vessel through which we carry our values and are able to carry out many of the things we do in our lives.

So physical health was part of the pursuit of happiness, but also the mental development. And it is not just pursuing knowledge, not rote memorization alone, which has its value—always has, always will have—but also the understanding of a philosophical person and an intellectually complete individual to complement the physically healthy and in-shape individual, philosophically sound, intellectually sound, but also theological sound.

That is eudemonia. That is the complete human being. That is making the most out of God's gift to us and developing ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, theologically, and psychologically. The whole human being.

The understanding that our Founding Fathers had was that you have a right to pursue this. You have a right to develop yourself. In fact, the implication is that we have an obligation to do so. That means we have got an obligation to evaluate the moral questions in front of us with the brain that we are given and the values that we have developed and the education that we worked to earn.

That is pursuit of happiness. But that is the lowest of the three on the priority, Mr. Speaker.

The next value is liberty. With that value of liberty, there are certain things that are liberty. We take liberty with our speech. We take liberty with our religion. We take liberty with the press. We have our right to assemble and all of those things. If someone is in pursuit of happiness, they are not going to take away our rights to our liberty.

Most of our rights to liberty are wrapped up in the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment catches the most important ones early. Also, the liberty to keep and bear arms, the property rights that come along in the Fifth Amendment, the components of liberty that we have and the provisions that allow us to face a jury of our peers and no double jeopardy. Those are liberties. The liberties that are defined trump the pursuit of happiness. In other words, someone else can't take away our freedom of speech because they are in search of a good tailgate party.

We go from the lowest priority, the pursuit of happiness, to the next level up, liberty, and to the highest level up, which is the right to life. Life itself is sacred.

When I talk to young people, I ask them the question: Do you believe that human life is sacred in all of its forms?

They look around each other in the bleacher seats in the gymnasium, if it happens to be a school in that fashion, and they come to a consensus: Yes.

And I will ask them: Is your life sacred? How about the person sitting next to you, is their life sacred?

After a little while, they start to nod their heads and agree.

It is no trick question. Human life is sacred in all of its forms. Once we understand that and we accept that universal consensus that is here in this society of America, then the only other thing we have to say is: Well, if human life is sacred and we protect it with all that we have, then we need to know when life begins and we need to know when life ends.

We know that in 1973, 44 years ago, the Supreme Court came to a conclusion. Well, actually, they didn't know, but they spoke of viability and they used a vague, mushy definition of viability and trimesters, but that is not a way to define life. When you deal with something that is sacred in all of its forms, you don't use a definition that says maybe it is or maybe it isn't a life; maybe it is viable, maybe it isn't; maybe it has actually crossed this threshold of this trimester or this one or this one.

So what they ended up in Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, the combination of the two was abortion on demand and the person's right to life. That personhood that begins at the moment of conception is subject to the judgment of the mother, who may think that this life is inconvenient to her liberty or her pursuit of happiness.

□ 1615

That was when they crossed a moral line that needs to be examined by everyone in this country who goes to the polls and votes or conducts themselves in a fashion that is affected by the abortion industry itself.

So I say to them, students especially: Is human life sacred in all of its forms?

The answer comes back: Yes, it is.

And then I say: Then you have to choose a moment that life begins, and that moment, there is only one moment that we know, and that is the moment of conception. That moment of conception that life begins is a moment that I believe that God places the soul in that little being that is a full complement of a combination of the DNA of the father and the mother, the full complement of the human being, a unique human being, a unique human being that there will never be another one exactly like that little baby that is conceived.

There will never be another one. Even identical twins have their distinctions, Mr. Speaker. Mothers can tell them apart. Not always easily, but they can tell. Fathers can tell little babies apart. Even though they have got matching DNA that is exactly the same DNA, they are still unique. They are still a little bit different in certain ways. Their personalities develop in different ways, and they have physical characteristics that become more and more apparent as the years go on. There are no two human beings exactly the same. That is because God made it that way. Think of how unique this is.

There are over 7 billion people now on this planet. Our population has gone over 7 billion people. Of all the people who have gone to their graves throughout history from the beginning of time, from the Garden of Eden until today, and all the people who live on the planet, 7 billion today, and of all the people who will come, likely by the billions, into the future, there are no two faces that are the same. They sometimes look a little the same—more than a little—but there are no two faces that are the same. There are no two faces that anybody who knows them can't tell the difference.

Think how genius it is to create a species, Homo sapiens. We each have a unique visage that will never be matched again throughout the duration of time. It has never been matched before from the beginning of time, and no matter what any scientist might do in a laboratory, there is never going to be anybody exactly the same, even if the DNA matches exactly. That is a unique approach to this.

Think about this: The thing that we measure ourselves by and recognize ourselves by, our face, our visage, carries with it the package of all of the emotions and the thoughts and the expressions that bypass so much need to use the words in this very excellent language that we have.

Think of how you interact with your friends, your family, your neighbors, when you are sitting at a meeting, when you are giving facial expressions that don't require a sound. People read those facial expressions, and they react off of them.

I think of the days that I am out, as Mr. FORTENBERRY said, working on a crew, maybe laying pipe with my three sons, and we may not even have to speak all day long because facial expressions, a nod here and there, we know each other, we can communicate with our facial expressions, and that is enough. That is a unique thing that we have been blessed with.

Every one of us is unique. Our lives begin at the moment of conception. We can't measure and we can't prove scientifically when that moment of conception is. We just know. We know that that is when that baby, when the components of the DNA of the father and the mother come together in that fertilized egg. That is the moment of conception; that is the moment that life begins.

I would like it if we could identify scientifically, if a little bell went off and we knew, here is conception. There is a unique little life here in the womb of the mother—and, by the way, she is a mother at that moment. But we can't do that yet.

We have come a long way. When our family was born, at that time, we couldn't tell whether it was a boy or a girl, and so it was nice, in my opinion, to have a surprise on whether it is a boy or a girl. Of course, I always prayed that they would be mentally healthy and, after that, physically healthy, but never began to ask whether it should be a boy or a girl.

But today we know. We can measure if it is a boy or a girl. We can tell facial characteristics. We can see the personality of these little unborn babies in the womb. When they make faces, you can see them grimace. You can see them smile. You can see them suck their thumb. There are many, many people in this country today who have a 4–D ultrasound of one or more of their children that is taken well before they are born.

I can think of one of my district personnel who has, in his office in Sioux City, a framed picture of the ultrasound of Joseph Dean Anderson, my godson. It is there, framed, the

ultrasound of that little baby boy months before he was born. Now he is about 7 years old or so, perfect little towheaded, blond-haired kid running around, full of happiness, love, and energy. But he was first known in his mother's womb and first recognized as a family member there and his picture framed. It still is there in the office in Sioux City. He is about tall enough to see it straight on these days.

That happens all over America because we know that life begins at the moment of conception. We hold it; we cherish life as sacred to us.

These little babies are the future of America. They are God's will, and they are the future of America. Yet, nearly 60 million of them have been aborted over the years since 1973 and Roe v. Wade, nearly 60 million. Think of that, 60 million babies in 44 years. And we are watching a nation that has a birthrate now that is lower than the replacement rate.

You hear debate on this floor, Mr. Speaker, that says that we have to go to foreign countries to bring people in here to do the work that we don't have enough people to do. I don't accept that as a rational thing for a country to do in that way.

What we need in this country is we need good people to have more babies and raise them right, and yet we are missing 60 million. That doesn't include the second generation of those who were aborted in the first half of the 44 years of Roe v. Wade.

Thomas Jefferson concluded that a generation was 19 years. It is probably a little longer than that today. Generations turned over, by his estimation, in 19 years. It is just convenient for me, 44 years since Roe v. Wade, I am going to call that, divided by two, two generations, 22 years a generation. Two generations, a third of Americans, gone because of a court decision that unjustly found, unconstitutionally found, immorally found, irrationally found, and the guilt that this Nation carries for tolerating a Supreme Court decision and accepting that Supreme Court decision.

But it is not everybody in this country who carries that guilt because we have armies of pro-life workers who are out there on a daily basis doing all they can to bridge the gap for, let's say, a mother who is in a crisis and can't care for the baby that is on the way; the crisis pregnancy centers that are there; the lives that have been saved by the thousands and thousands by the pro-life workers, the lives that have been saved by the inspiration that comes from seeing hundreds of thousands of pro-life marchers come to this city and make that march from around the Washington Monument on up to the Supreme Court and to the west side of the Supreme Court to plead for justice for those who are voiceless in the unborn.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is time for this Congress to address this. It is time for Congress to move along the issue. And so because we cannot medically prove when a conception begins, we believe profoundly that personhood begins at the moment of conception, and personhood needs to be protected in all of its forms. The closest we can get to verifying that personhood, that conception, is the measure of the heartbeat. We all know that a beating heart is life. When the heart stops beating, life ends.

Now, we can detect a heartbeat as early as 16 days from conception, and often the number is published to be 18 days from conception, Mr. Speaker. It may not always be detectible in every pregnancy that early, but it is entirely detectible early on in the pregnancy.

So I have introduced legislation, Mr. Speaker, to protect these innocent babes, these babes that can't speak for themselves, that can't cry out for their own mercy, but they are already formed in their mother's womb, and the unique individual that grows from the matching of those two DNAs. And when that heart starts to beat, a physician can detect that heartbeat, when they can detect the heartbeat, we need to protect the baby. With the understanding that when a heartbeat can be detected the baby must be protected, I have drafted and introduced legislation that is H.R. 490, Mr. Speaker.

Now, this bill is titled the Heartbeat Protection Act of 2017. It makes a life-saving stride in enshrining the rights, the rights of the unborn, into U.S. law. It ensures that no child for whom a heartbeat is detectible is aborted unless the life of the child's mother is endangered in fact by a physical disorder, by a physical illness, or by a physical injury.

Any abortionist who performs an abortion under this legislation, H.R. 490, the Heartbeat Protection Act of 2017, any abortionist who performs an abortion in spite of a detectible heartbeat and outside of the exceptions that I have defined, which is for a physical disorder, a physical illness, or a physical injury, any physician who performs an abortion outside of those exceptions would be subject to a fine or imprisonment—and that is for a period up to 5 years—or both. This is a serious piece of legislation, and it needs to be, because life itself is the number one thing that is sacred here on this planet, especially in this country.

This legislation, the Heartbeat Protection Act of 2017, will require all physicians before conducting an abortion to detect the heartbeat of the unborn child; and that means they have to maintain the records of their endeavor to detect a heartbeat, and if a heartbeat is detected, the baby is protected. That is the center of this law.

Ever since Roe v. Wade, which was unconstitutionally decided in 1973, 44 years ago, these 60 million babies—almost 60 million babies that have been ended by the abortion industry—have received a rubber stamp from the courts, from the Federal Government, not from this Congress and not from the States. The Supreme Court overrules the efforts in the States to protect innocent, unborn human life. The Supreme Court overrules this Congress to protect unborn human life, and we have been trying to find ways around that decision ever since 1973. But I have introduced the bill, and it will protect the lives of the voiceless innocents.

Then to make a point now, Mr. Speaker, there are probably some people who are thinking this is a little bit too big of a leap for where we are on the topic today. I would submit that it is not, that we have been working too patiently with what I will call incrementalism. When I came to this Congress more than a decade ago, I had been, at that time, already working to try to help pass legislation that banned partial-birth abortions, and the Supreme Court had found the partial-birth abortion ban to be unconstitutional based on a couple of things. One of them was the Supreme Court ruled that it was necessary to save the life of the mother or the health of the mother, and the other one was that Congress hadn't defined the act precisely enough.

So we went to work in the Committee on the Judiciary. I want to thank Congressman STEVE CHABOT of Ohio for taking the lead on this issue. We held hearing after hearing, and Congress had findings that a partial-birth abortion was never medically necessary to save the life of the mother; and that is with much, much testimony of experts before the committee for a long period of time definitively concluding such, and then the act itself was more precisely defined.

Then it went back before the courts, and each of the Federal districts that heard the case, three of them, simultaneously, all of them turned it down as unconstitutional. But it went to the Supreme Court, where the ban on partial-birth abortion was upheld. It has saved some lives but has put a small dent in this huge 60 million aborted babies industry.

We began to go to work on this in other ways. We have legislation that is introduced before this Congress that bans sex-selected abortions.

We know that there are mothers and fathers that will use the ultrasound to determine the sex of the baby. If they want a little baby boy and it is a girl, sometimes they will abort that little girl and try again for a boy. We know this is happening in places like China, where they have had, up until recently, the one-child policy, and the proportion of boys to girls is way out of whack in China because they are aborting little baby girls because they would prefer having a boy.

□ 1630

That happens in America, too, but not as statistically evident. It is immoral to do that. That piece of legislation has 77 percent support. That is the strongest support we have, statistically, for abortion legislation that

exists, as far as I know, in this Congress.

Then we have pain-capable legislation, little babies that can feel the pain of abortion when that needle with a saline solution is stuck into—Mr. Speaker, I am just going to bypass the details of how this functions. Babies can feel pain. They can experience joy; they can experience pleasure; and they can experience pain. We have legislation to prohibit abortion from the time that we can determine that that baby feels the pain of being aborted. But that is a definition of pain, not a definition of life.

If this is a unique life, as I have described at length here, then this unique life must be protected. We don't say this unique life which has this soul—and God put in this soul from the moment of conception—doesn't deserve to be protected unless they feel pain. What we are saying is it bothers our conscience too much to have a baby killed that can feel the pain and suffering.

I support these other two pieces of legislation that I have described: the ban on sex-selective abortion and the ban on pain-capable abortion. But, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't get at the heart of this.

The heart of this is this: sacred human life. Human life, sacred in all of its forms, begins at the moment of conception. We need legislation to protect that personhood. And when we can define and clearly detect a heartbeat, a heartbeat in a baby from as early as 16 days, we must protect the life of that innocent baby.

So that, Mr. Speaker, is my conviction, my deep conviction, my very profoundly held conviction. But I wonder: What does the rest of the country think?

Sometimes I find myself out there right without a majority. Sometimes they will say: Well, you didn't have a majority because you weren't right. And this one, I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, human life is sacred in all of its forms.

So we ask the question in polling across America: What do the American people think of the proposal to ban abortion once a heartbeat can be detected? Mr. Speaker, the polling that we have out there is very carefully done, and I am going to give you the numbers first. This is the general number that asks the question, if the heartbeat is detected, the baby is protected, and here is how the polling came together. Sixty-nine percent agree with the position that I have just taken here in the bill that I have introduced, which is H.R. 490, the Heartbeat Protection Act of 2017.

The data contained in this polling report are responses to a question that was commissioned by Faith2Action. That is in a Barna Group OmniPoll. 1,002 interviews were conducted of U.S. adults nationwide. The sampling error for this 1,002 interviews is plus or minus 3.1 percent. That is about as accurate as you get with polling. That means that there is a 95 percent confidence level that these numbers are right.

The data is weighted in the national distribution of U.S. adults. They took minimal statistical weighting and they used it to calibrate the samples—so, of known population percentages—and it is in relation to the demographic variables of age, gender. I bet it is age, sex, education, and region, so that it is scientifically applied. It is a poll that was run from January 19 until January 27. This is pretty fresh information, about as fresh as it gets.

These interviews were conducted over a majority landline—60 percent or so off landlines and 40 percent off cell phones or other mobile devices, so that we got a good cross section of people throughout that. They were conducted by experienced, trained interviewers. They were supervised at all times. They were monitored. They were computer-assisted telephone interviewing to make sure that the balance of this thing was as good and as objective as it could get, Mr. Speaker.

So this polling result says, among U.S. adults nationwide, a slight majority, 55 percent, agree strongly that, if a doctor is able to detect the heartbeat of an unborn baby, that baby should be legally protected—that is the core of the question that was asked—and 18 percent disagree either strongly or somewhat with this.

So when I look at the numbers here, 69 percent overall are packaged up within the agree strongly component—fifty-five percent. Now, that is landslide in a political election, 55 percent. And this will be a landslide in the polling that says 55 percent strongly agree that, if a doctor can detect a heartbeat, the unborn baby should be protected by law, a 55 percent landslide majority, Mr. Speaker. And then you add to that the 14 percent who agree somewhat with this.

So, from a general agreement standpoint, 69 percent, or as close as you can get and not exactly hit the number, 7 in 10 Americans say let's protect those lives of those innocent, unborn babies when you can hear their heartbeat.

The people who disagree strongly are only 10 percent. And then those who disagree somewhat are another 8 percent; 18 percent disagreeing on the other side, but only 10 percent disagree strongly.

So 55 percent say they strongly support a ban on abortion, once a heartbeat can be detected, the baby is protected, and only 10 percent disagree with that strongly. I am going to say that they are probably some of the hardcore leftists that I am engaged in debate with on almost a daily basis with here, Mr. Speaker. But you can divide 10 percent into 55 percent and say, for everyone out here who says we should not protect that innocent, unborn baby whose heart is beating, for everyone who says that, there are five and a half Americans who say we have to protect, we have got an obligation to, and they believe strongly that we protect the lives of those innocent, unborn babies with a heartbeat.

That is a huge majority on the side of life. I am very gratified to know that that is the position of the American people, with only a 3.1 percent margin of error in a scientific poll that I am happy now is part of the RECORD in the United States Congress.

I would say there is another way to analyze this poll. I am looking at this one that says there are 13 percent undecided, Mr. Speaker. So you have 69 percent who agree altogether, and you have got 18 percent that disagree altogether, and 13 percent that neither agree nor disagree. Now, I always wonder, when we are doing polling, why do we measure those without an opinion? If they don't agree or disagree, that is about the definition of ambivalent. They call that mox nix where I come from.

So if I take that out of there and calculate it the other way and put it together, you add together 69 percent and 18 percent, and then you say what percentage are those that agree, well, it is actually 79.3 percent say we should not abort a baby whose heart is beating, and 20.7 percent say, well, it would be okay with them if we did. That is another way of measuring this. And that is a 4-to-1 measure—5.5-to-1, 4-to-1 Americans are ready to protect innocent, unborn human life.

Mr. Speaker, think what this means. Think what it means that we are a society that seems to have plugged our ears to the understanding that life begins at conception. I have known this for a long time. It wasn't a mystery to me.

I see the beautiful little baby going out now. Mr. Speaker, that is a very gratifying thing to see from down here, parents raising their children right.

But from my standpoint, I have this memory. Marilyn and I were married in 1972. I remember sitting there in card club, and the discussion at that time was we have all these babies being born in Central America and why do they have these babies if they can't feed them? Why don't they just abort them? I remember that discussion around card club on a Friday night.

It didn't really trigger me at the time because we hadn't been very far into the abortion debate. I hadn't thought about it very much. We weren't parents, and Marilyn wasn't pregnant at the time. We were just married.

So I remember that discussion though, and it just didn't hit me. It just kind of went through. I don't even know if I engaged in it. I just remember that somebody at the table said, well, if they can't feed them, why don't they just have an abortion?

Well, not very long after that our first child was born. And I picked up that little baby—actually, he wasn't little. He was just a little bit short of 9 pounds. But I looked at him, and I

was in such awe of the miracle of that little boy, that little baby boy named David. There was an aura about him. He was a product of Marilyn and me from our love. And there he is, a miraculous little child in my hands, warm and squirmy and soft and beautiful and a miracle. It is different if it is somebody else's child, I suppose, because it hadn't hit me like that. But there was an aura about this little baby, and you could have convinced me he was the second coming of Jesus Christ, himself.

And I looked at him and I thought, how could anyone take this little miracle's life? How could they kill this baby now? He is minutes old. How could they take his life the minute before he is born? No one could do that—well, almost no one. Could they take his life the minute after he was born? Or could they take it the minute before he was born? Or could someone take his life an hour before he was born or a day? Or could they take it a week before he was born or a month or one trimester or two trimesters or 8 months or 36 weeks or 37 weeks before he was born? What changed? What changed throughout that time?

In a matter of minutes, it all fell into place for me. From the moment of conception he was formed in his mother's womb, and from that point on he is growing on the genetic configuration that he is, blessed with a soul placed in him at that moment. That little boy grew from that point on, and now he is the father of three of my grandchildren. They are all miracles to me. And our other sons are all miracles to me, and our other grandchildren are all miracles to me.

But I can't conceive of doing anything except sacrificing, if I needed to, my life to protect them because they are unique human beings, worthy of all of the protection that society can give them, just like every American is; and, in fact, everybody on this planet is seen in God's eyes.

There has to be a moment that our lives begin. We have to choose that because we can't have an immoral position coming out of law that says, well, it is up to the mother to decide whether this baby is going to have an opportunity to fill its lungs full of free air and scream for its own mercy. They can't do that from the moment of conception, but they can do that from the moment of birth. And if we could hear that inner womb scream at that moment of abortion, we would plug our ears in terror and fright at the crime that abortion is.

So it is our moral obligation to protect all human life from the moment of conception until natural death. That is what this bill does, H.R. 490, the Heartbeat Protection Act of 2017.

The polling that we have here says clearly that the American people agree. And it is not only, Mr. Speaker, the American people—well, it is actually in the polling. But I separated them out into categories so we could understand how people think about this and how they think about it from the categories of being Republicans and Democrats and no party or Independents.

As you can see, among the Republicans, 86 percent agree that, if a heartbeat can be detected, the baby is protected. That is 86 to 6 percent disagree. Eighty-six percent of Republicans, that is about as high a number as you see on anything.

I should run a little measure sometime when you ask, does the Sun come up in the east. That is probably about only a 97 percent issue. But it is 86 percent want to protect a baby with a heartbeat—Republicans.

Democrats, still that landslide majority of 55 percent of Democrats want to protect a baby from the moment a heartbeat can be detected—25 percent say no, 55 percent say yes. It is more than a 2-to-1 support among Democrats to support the language that is in this bill for H.R. 490, the Heartbeat Protection Act.

And then when you go among Independents, they are a little more pro-life than Democrats are. I shouldn't be surprised at that. Sixty-one percent of Independents want to protect a baby from the moment that their heartbeat can be detected.

□ 1645

This is a huge issue for America. America is not yet informed enough about this legislation that is available. And sometimes we get stuck in a rut and we decide, well, we have been working on the sex-selective legislation or the pain-capable legislation, or we have been trying to get Planned Parenthood defunded—which this Congress must do—and we need to do it perpetually, not just annually.

Those are all things that we need to be working on, but it is time now for this Congress to swing for the fences, to move legislation that is based upon a clear and distinct principle of life. If that heartbeat of that little baby's heart, that innocent little baby can be detected, we have a moral obligation to protect that baby.

Then how do we measure the end of life? And how has it been from time immemorial? When the heart stops? When the heart can no longer beat?

Yes, we measure brain waves and we do other things. But when that heart stops and it can't be started and we can't sustain life, we call that death. And when an abortion is committed, that little baby's heart is beating. And you know that the abortion stops a beating heart. That is on posters by the Knights of Columbus and others all over this country. Abortion stops a beating heart.

We need to protect the lives of all of those little babies with beating hearts. We can detect them now with the ultrasound and the science that we have. It is time for this Congress to move.

In our March for Life here that I mentioned a little earlier, Mr. Speaker, when we have hundreds of thousands of people that come out here and gather on The Mall and then march to the Supreme Court building to plead for the court to protect innocent, unborn human life, what is happening is America is waking up. America is feeling the guilt, and we pray for the mothers who have had abortions. But America is also understanding that there is a life that begins at the moment of conception.

So of all of the families that have first bonded with this little unborn baby by seeing the ultrasound—sometimes by framing it, as exists in my Sioux City office for Joseph Dean Anderson's ultrasound—but millions of those cases across the country are raising the awareness of the American people, and it is not just the mother and the father that see that ultrasound.

They see it in realtime, and they hear the sound for real. It is not just a picture that goes up on the wall that is framed, but it is a living, breathing, moving organism where you can see that innocent little baby squirming and moving around inside in the amniotic fluid, and you can see the expressions on their face and the movement that is there. That this is a real human being and you want to get your hands on that little baby and hold them and love them, but you have to wait until they grow enough that you can do that.

But family after family has this, and little brothers and sisters are shown that ultrasound and they say: This is your little brother or little sister that we expect on such and such date—we have become pretty close with that date. And so kids, brothers and sisters, the siblings are recognizing their brother or their sister, acknowledging that they are an innocent unborn human being well before they are born. And they grow up knowing this.

Now, for the 44 years since Roe v. Wade, we have millions of millions of pro-life people and millions and millions of anti-abortion people who understand this. They grew up understanding this. And no one can any longer tell them that it is just a blob of a tissue and that it is not alive.

I recall a World War II veteran, one who I admired and respected. He has passed away now, as many of them have. His name was Vic Lunsman. We were having this discussion while we were talking about building terraces and tiling, and he said: When the pro-abortion people say that this baby is not alive—if this baby is not alive, why then do you have to kill it? Why do you have to kill it?

I thought he put that into a package about as compressed as it could be. We know that abortion ends an innocent life of an innocent human being that is created in the same image that we are recreated in, in God's image. And now we know from 16 days on that—it is not just that we know that there is a heartbeat, but we can hear it. We can hear the beat, beat, beat, beat, beat of

that little heart. And to think of that little heart struggling for life; to think of that baby squirming to try to avoid the abortionist; to think of that baby feeling the pain; to think of that baby being aborted because the mother or the father wanted a boy or a girl; or because somebody told them that that baby wasn't going to be exactly perfect, none of that measures up against innocent, unborn human life, sacred life, that life that we have to protect from the moment of conception to natural death.

That is what is wrapped up in this heartbeat bill. And if we had the science to prove the moment of conception, I would be standing here with a moment of conception bill. We don't have that science today, but we do have the science of detecting a heartbeat.

And we know the sound of a beating heart is the sound of life. And if you can detect a heartbeat, if you can hear that heart beating in any of us, you know that person is alive; you know there is a spirit within us; you know that our soul is still within our body; and you know that there is a hope for us—at least whoever that might be whose heart we are listening to—to get up and to move about, to live, love, laugh, learn, reproduce, and contribute, to glorify this Earth in a way that we are challenged to do.

Yet, 60 million babies have been denied that opportunity and have been denied that gift of life.

What might they have done? What might they have done for America? What might they have done for the world? How many Presidents, how many Mother Teresas, how many Billy Grahams? How many people have lost their life before they ever had a chance to breathe and fight for it that might have solved the problems that we are facing today here in this United States Congress?

We can't deny that potential. We carry that guilt today, but the best we can do is end it as soon as we can end it. And we would end 90 to 95 percent of the abortions in America with H.R. 490 the Heartbeat Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind you here in this Congress that this is a bill that has strong support in the polling that we have rolled out here. Eighty-six percent of Republicans say that if a heartbeat can be detected, the baby should be protected. Fifty-five percent of Democrats agree that if a heartbeat can be detected, the baby is protected. Sixty-one percent of Independents say that if a heartbeat can be detected, the baby is protected. And of those who oppose it—at least those who oppose it vigorously—only 6 percent of Republicans, 25 percent of Democrats—and I am going to suspect that a fair amount of these 25 percent of Democrats, Mr. Speaker, are more for political reasons and that they wouldn't be able to sustain themselves in a moral debate on the topic. I think that may or may not be the case for the 27 percent of no parties.

But to put this back into summary, Mr. Speaker, here are easier numbers to remember: 69 percent of the American people, with only a 3.1 percent margin of error, believe that if a heartbeat can be detected, the baby is protected. That is 7 in 10 Americans that take that stand. And that is one of the strongest pieces of support you can get for any bill that would ever come to this floor or any discussion that we ever have if you get up to that level of 7 out of 10, and only 18 percent disagree vigorously.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the people that listen in on this conversation between us have contemplated the central points that I have put into this debate and this discussion here this evening, and I hope they have thought about the principles that are involved. I hope they are able to carry this message along to their children and grandchildren, and into our schools and our classrooms, our churches and our synagogues all across this land, this profound belief that if Americans share; that we believe that human life is sacred and it needs to be then sacred in all of its forms.

The second question is: At what moment does life begin?

There is only one moment in the full development of a full human being, and that is the moment of conception. The closest we can scientifically get to proof of that conception is the sound and the detection of that heartbeat, which we all recognize to be the sound of life. That sound of life, that beat of that heart cannot be extinguished by a moral human being who believes that a human life is sacred in all of its forms, and knows that it begins at the moment of conception. And then we can measure the heartbeat and protect that baby from the moment that that heart has begun to beat.

Any doctor that fails to follow the directive in this legislation, in H.R. 490, any doctor that fails to search for a heartbeat and conducts an abortion without—or conducts an abortion in spite of that beating heart is facing a fine and a prison term up to 5 years, or both.

That is a respect for human life. By the way, we hold the mother harmless. She is also protected from any touch of this law. It is only the abortionist that is the subject of this piece of legislation that I have introduced. But it aims to protect human life from at least the moment that the heartbeat can be detected; the baby is protected. And this will gain momentum as we go forward.

The American people will understand what this means. I am hopeful that across our churches, across our schools, across our families, they begin to talk about the Heartbeat Protection Act of 2017. And our little kids that grow up, as mine did—having once seen the film, that families grow up respecting the heartbeat of innocent, unborn human life.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your attention this evening. I yield back the balance of my time.

DISMANTLING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be with you this afternoon. I have a series of other speakers who will be joining me later in the hour from the Progressive Caucus, as we discuss some of the key events of the week from our perspective.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all the Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I love magic, and I bet a lot of people out there watching today love magic, too. Ever since I was a kid, I loved the cup tricks, the card tricks, and the rabbit coming out of the hat. When I was in college, I even used to entertain at elementary school birthday parties, helping to pay my way through college.

The key move in magic, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is the sleight of hand. I looked up the definition of ''sleight of hand'' in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, which defines it as a cleverly executed deception.

A sleight of hand is also sometimes called a prestidigitation, quick fingers, or legerete de la main, which is the French phrase for ''lightness of hand.'' It is defined as the set of closely related techniques used by a stage magician to manipulate the perceptions of the audience.

Sleight of hand depends on the use of psychology, careful stage misdirection, constant blabbering, and strategic confusion to distract the audience.

Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States has been masterfully deploying sleight of hand ever since his inauguration. With his nonstop tweeting and his incessant mad antics, the President distracts us from the real action, which is what is happening here in Congress. We are witnessing a magic trick on the world's largest stage, the auditorium of American democracy. And we, the people, are the captive, bedazzled, and totally distracted audience of the President. The tweets are a massive sleight of hand distracting us from the serious destruction of public policy and law that is taking place right here in Congress.

□ 1700

I want to say, at the outset, I prefer to think of this as a magic trick because the alternative that the President simply can't control himself is almost too horrific to contemplate.

The Constitution does have a way of dealing with that problem, too, and you can find it in the 25th Amendment.

Today, we are going to assume that all of this is a magic show. I used to coach kids' soccer. And when I coached soccer, I would always tell the kids: Don't bunch. Keep your eye on the ball. Stay in your lane and pass the ball.

Without fail, the youngest kids who are just starting out, they all chase the ball. They move around the field in a big clump, a big mob. And I would say: Don't follow the mob that is following the ball. Go to where the ball is going to be going.

When they are young, they don't know how to do it.

I think that advice applies here as well to America, to the body politic. Don't follow the mob that is following the ball. Let's not be distracted full time by all the tomfoolery and tweetfoolery.

There are important and dangerous things happening right here in Congress right now. While the President is tweeting insults and fake news and inflating his slender college victory and the size of his inaugural crowd and making fun of Meryl Streep and chatting about Nordstrom's department store and talking about how he is going to make Mexico pay for his wall and so on, what is taking place in Congress is the systematic dismantling of the regulatory apparatus that the American public depends on for clean air, clean water, safe food, a decent environment, and control of criminality in the country.

The fundamental political action that we must be paying attention to now is the dismantling of the regulatory apparatus of the Federal Government, which is happening every day right here in the Halls of Congress. This is the apparatus that protects our food, our air, our water, our health care, our financial system, the ability of people to invest safely on Wall Street, occupational safety and health for our workers. All of this is being attacked in terrifying and often invisible ways.

Behind the scenes, while the wizard of odd convenes a dinner in Mar-a-Lago where he entertains a national security crisis discussion in full view of other diners who begin to tweet out and Facebook out what they are seeing happen, while all of that is happening, Congress is rolling back environmental protections to protect streams, rivers, and drinking water from pollution. They are savaging the rules that restrict the volume of greenhouse gas emissions that are leaked into the atmosphere, destabilizing our climate system. Check out H.J. Res. 38 and 36.

While the distractor in chief whines about leaks, while his whole campaign was based on leaks of emails that were captured by Russian agents working to get him elected, in Congress, they are rolling back financial regulations which ensure that workers have retirement savings options, H.J. Res. 66, and which protect consumers from excessive financial risks, H.R. 78.

They have also targeted and rolled back labor regulations that promote safe and healthy workplaces and fair employment practices, H.J. Res. 37.

Amazingly, while President Trump's National Security Adviser, General Flynn, was forced to resign when it was revealed that he had been colluding with Russians to lift the sanctions that the Obama administration had imposed on Russia, here in Congress, we are passing joint resolutions to rescind anticorruption regulations that required oil and gas companies to report monetary payments that they made to foreign governments, H.J. Res. 41.

So Trump tweets about leaks, while his administration is one vast leak to the Russians. And here, Members of the GOP are working to throw an invisibility and secrecy cloak over corporate payments being made to foreign governments and corporations.

While the world is distracted by all of the sleight of hand, this Congress is passing bills to give government back to giant corporations and special interests that care not for the common good but simply for their own bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, as a freshman, I have been here for only 8 weeks. I have to tell you that I am disappointed that I have not voted on a single bill in the House Judiciary Committee that has had so much as a hearing. Yes, I want to repeat that. We have voted on five bills since I got here and not one of them has had a hearing.

Now, I come from the Maryland State Senate where I proudly served for 10 years as a State senator. When we had a bill coming up, no bill could be brought to the floor without a hearing first, and anybody who wanted to come testify on the bill could come testify on it. Now, that is not practicable here in the U.S. Congress. However, we could at least have experts relating to the bill and people who are affected by the bill come in and testify, but we haven't done that in the House Judiciary Committee. Instead, we voted on a series of bills which, to my mind, dramatically curtail the public interest.

Yesterday, we voted on a bill to dismantle, essentially to put into a stifling straightjacket, the class-action mechanism that has been used over the decades to vindicate the interest of people who are victims of sex discrimination, victims of race discrimination, victims of toxic torts, victims of asbestos poisoning. We voted basically to trash class action yesterday without even so much as a bill.

Now, on some of the other bills, it was said to me: Well, there were hearings in prior Congresses. One Member said: We had a hearing on that back in 2012.

This is 2017, 5 years later. But on this particular bill that I am talking about, nobody even heard the bill. There was no hearing on it. It was simply brought up for a vote. That is irresponsible legislation. That is not real democracy when you don't even have a hearing and people who are affected by the legislation don't have the opportunity to come and talk about it.

Now, they are not having hearings because they think—and they are probably right—we're not paying attention. What are we paying attention to? We are paying attention to the magician. We are paying attention to the wizard of odd. We are paying attention to the tweets instead.

The good news is that the audience is starting to wise up. The whole country is waking up to the profound dangers of the administration's financial and political entanglements with Russia, with the Russian corporate and governmental elite.

Just this week, the National Security Adviser, Mr. Flynn, resigned after reports came out about his communications with the Russian Ambassador while President Obama was still in office, communications dealing with the lifting of sanctions on Russia, communications that General Flynn lied about and was forced from office because of it. He misled Vice President MIKE PENCE and other officials about his conversations with the diplomat, which was being monitored and recorded by the intelligence community.

Now, Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, my fellow Americans, let's think about this for a moment. As a former chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Mr. Flynn was no innocent about the world of spy versus spy. He must have known that his telephone call with the Russian Ambassador was being monitored and recorded. If he really wanted to go rogue and operate on his own without the permission and the license of President Trump, he never would have allowed that telephone conversation to be recorded. But he did allow it to be recorded. He made the call with presumable full knowledge that other people in the intelligence community would be listening in on it, which leads me to the inescapable, logical conclusion that Flynn knew that, in making that call, he enjoyed the full support of the one person above him who could remove him from his job, the President of the United States.

Now, do I know that? No, I don't know it. I surmise it. How are we going to know whether or not this is true? How do we get to the bottom of the Russian connection in the campaign? How do we get to the bottom of the Russian connection in the Trump administration?

We need to have a full, complete, independent investigation by experts, like the 9/11 Commission, which gets to the bottom of this profound danger, this dagger pointed at the throat of American democracy.

Mr. Speaker, everybody loves magic, I think. Everybody loves the enchantment of being fooled, of being distracted, of being diverted. That is why people go to magic shows. It is diverting. It is amusing. It is fun.

Everybody loves a great magician, too. None was greater in our history than the great Houdini, who dazzled the world with his extraordinary optical illusions and effects, his amazing ability to simulate telepathy and telekinesis.

Houdini also had a very strong ethical and professional code about being a magician. He never revealed a trick. More importantly, he never tried to fool people in order to defraud them. He never tried to fool people in order to humiliate them. He never tried to fool people in order to take away their rights. He never tried to fool people in order to demoralize and crush them or to strip them of their freedom. He never tried to fool people in order to victimize them.

Indeed, in the 1920s, Mr. Houdini channeled all of his magnificent energy away from doing his magic shows and instead put it into the separate but related task of exposing psychics, mediums, con men, charlatans, and practitioners of the occult and the dark arts who did take advantage of people's good will, who did take advantage of people's impressionability to defraud them, to take their money, their belongings, and to distract them from the real world, and to undermine the moral and ethical principles that should govern human behavior and must govern social life.

Although Houdini is no longer with us, he has great heirs today in socially responsible magicians like the Amazing Randi and Penn & Teller.

Already millions of Americans themselves—millions of us in the audience—have woken up to the fact that we have been pulled into an irrational and dangerous fantasy world, an echo chamber of malignant narcissism, cruelty, and paranoia.

It is time for all of us to stop being distracted, to stop being bedazzled, and pay attention to the real game, which is, one, trying to get America to join with Vladimir Putin, a dictator and an autocrat who said that the single greatest catastrophe of the 20th century was the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in order to create an international league of dictators, demagogues, and despots to violate human rights and crush liberal democracy; and, two, to dismantle at home the public regulatory infrastructure which protects our land, our air, our water, our climate, our liberties, our freedoms, our equal rights, and our capacity to function as the greatest democracy on Earth and to function as an efficient and effective government meeting the needs of the people.

The magicians out there—there aren't many—but you have a special obligation to help us blow the whistle, and you are doing it. But it is really the American people—it is all of us who must stand up.

The Constitution talks about three branches of government. Article I is Congress. Article II is the executive. Article III is the judiciary. Let's call Congress the first branch.

But when you think about it, what is even more important than the Congress is the trunk, the roots of democracy. Everything grows up from the people. The branches are out there, but Congress works for the people. The President works for Congress and the people. The Supreme Court and the judiciary work for the people.

It is time for the people to dissolve the spells that have been cast over the country, to say this is a democracy. We operate by the Constitution and the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate participating in this Special Order hour about things that, I think, the American people really ought to be caring about.

The minute that Donald Trump took the oath of office and put his hand in the air, he was in violation of the law. It is just a fact that the Trump Hotel, which is in the old post office building—there is a very explicit contract that says no elected official may enter into a contract for that hotel and profit from the business in that hotel. There was a lawsuit that was filed. It is still pending.

You may not think that is a really big deal, but how about this: What if there were delegations from somewhere else in the world, some country that really wanted to curry favor with the United States of America, and decided a really good way to do it would be to move our delegation to stay at the Trump Hotel?

□ 1715

Maybe we could have a big gala, we could have a party, and we could make a lot of money from that. And guess what. Maybe the President of the United States would notice that we are spending money in a hotel from which he gains a profit, and that would be a really swell idea.

Well, actually, the Framers of the Constitution thought that was not such a grand idea and very explicitly put into the Constitution something that would prohibit any foreign government from influencing U.S. policy. They were worried about the King of England. They were worried about France. They were worried about other countries having too much influence on the United States by currying favor with the President and the decision-makers, and so they introduced and put into the Constitution very explicitly what they called the Emoluments Clause in Article I, section 9 of the Constitution.

While ''emoluments'' is certainly not a word we use in regular conversations—emoluments, I never used it before this and never heard of it before this, actually—it is a concept that is part of our Constitution, and it is very simple: that no government official should receive benefits of any kind—of any kind—from a foreign government. President Trump is clearly violating that constitutional principle.

So, unlike any Presidents before him, President Trump has actually refused to fully separate himself and his family from his business dealings. It is also very unusual, of course, that we haven't seen his tax returns, which has been pretty standard for any President to release his tax returns, and it has been a requirement for the Cabinet that Mr. Trump has exacted from those nominees.

Because of his business holdings, Trump and his family are constantly—constantly—receiving benefits from other countries, whether it is foreign governments renting that space at the Trump Hotel in D.C. or the loans and business agreements that the Trump organization has with China, Russia, and many other countries. We don't know them all. We haven't seen them all. That would be in his tax returns and all the different sections of the tax return, his holdings in Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, which he has refused to put into a blind trust.

So it is troubling enough that President Trump and his family are profiting off the Presidency, but now it is becoming clearer that this lack of ethics could threaten our national security and national interests. So if you haven't cared until now, you ought to start caring.

Look at Russia. Trump has done business in Russia and has remained uncomfortably close to Vladimir Putin. He refuses to release his tax returns, which could clarify the specific financial interests that he has in Russia.

President Trump knew his National Security Adviser, Michael Flynn, was compromised by Russian intelligence and had misled Vice President PENCE; yet Flynn was allowed to remain in one of our most sensitive national security positions until criticism from Congress, the media, and the public became too much to ignore.

President Trump continues to gloss over the serious problems that led to Flynn's resignation. Instead, he attacks the messenger and the leaks that brought Flynn's conduct to light. These are bright red flags. These are signs that the President has something to hide.

Americans deserve a President who they can trust is putting the country's interests ahead of his own, that he is putting the country's interests instead of another country's interests because that deal might be in his interest.

There should be no question over the purity of the President's motives, especially when he is making critical security decisions on behalf of the Nation. If President Trump wants to assure the American people that he deserves our

trust, he must be transparent. We need a bipartisan, independent investigation of his conflicts of interest, particularly with Russia, but not exclusively. He must release his tax returns, and he must fully separate himself from his business dealings.

The corrupt practices of this administration must stop. Our country and our Constitution demand nothing less.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), my good friend, the Assistant Democratic Leader.

HONORING VOORHEES COLLEGE AND DENMARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to continue honoring HBCUs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, for their significant contributions to our Nation's history.

While only 3 percent of our Nation's higher education institutions are Historically Black, HBCUs produce 20 percent of the African-American college graduates. Today, I recognize and celebrate two of the seven HBCUs in my congressional district, Voorhees College and Denmark Technical College, both in Denmark, South Carolina.

Voorhees College was founded as Denmark Industrial School in 1897 by Elizabeth Evelyn Wright when she was just 23 years old. Wright studied at Tuskegee Institute and was a devotee of Booker T. Washington. She had previously led efforts to start schools for African Americans in South Carolina, which were always met with arson and threats of violence. She persisted in her efforts to offer African Americans an opportunity for a better life and, with Voorhees, created an institution that would stand the test of time.

Wright originally taught classes in an old store in Denmark, but, in 1902, New Jersey philanthropist Ralph Voorhees donated money to purchase land and construct a building for the school. A high school at first, Voorhees offered classes at this level for African Americans in the area.

In 1924, the Episcopal Church partnered with Voorhees, and an affiliation with that church continues to this day. The college began to offer junior college degrees in 1947 and 4-year degrees in 1962. While originally founded on the principles of Booker T. Washington to teach job and trade skills to African Americans, Voorhees now proudly claims to offer a blend of Washington's philosophy and that of W. E. B. Du Bois, who believed a classical liberal arts education was vital to the development of African Americans.

The college's recently retired president, Dr. Cleveland Sellers, is a Denmark native who graduated from Voorhees High School. Sellers went on to Howard University, where he became active with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, participating in its 1966 March against Fear.

In 1968, after returning to South Carolina, Sellers was arrested and imprisoned for supposedly inciting the confrontation between students and police that became known as the Orangeburg massacre, when police opened fire on students, killing 3 and injuring 27.

Voorhees' College's new president, Dr. W. Franklin Evans, previously served as interim president of my alma mater, South Carolina State. In that role, he successfully led South Carolina State out of a financial crisis. I sincerely believe that Voorhees College is well-positioned for the future with Dr. Evans at its helm.

Denmark Technical College, whose campus is adjacent to Voorhees, was originally a branch of the South Carolina Trade School System. It was created in 1948 by the South Carolina General Assembly and mandated to provide trade skills to African Americans. During the ''separate but equal'' era, Denmark Tech was one of the few opportunities for trade school education offered to African Americans by the State.

In the early 1960s, Governor Fritz Hollings and then-Senator John West led the effort to create the South Carolina Technical College System. In 1969, the existing trade school in Denmark was transferred into the system and the modern Denmark Technical College was created. Its total enrollment is approximately 2,000, 96 percent of whom are minority students. Denmark Tech continues to provide technical education and trade skills in its assigned region of Bamberg, Barnwell, and Allendale Counties.

Voorhees College and Denmark Technical College, like their fellow HBCUs, have made an indelible impact on their communities, South Carolina, and the Nation. They have provided generations of African Americans educational opportunities, and I look forward to their continued success.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, we should be joined momentarily by Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE. I want to close out, though, my own thoughts by responding to something I have been hearing over the last week here in the Halls of Congress.

Now that it is clear from our intelligence agencies, 16 of them, including the CIA, the FBI, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and so on, that Vladimir Putin had a deliberate campaign of espionage, cyber sabotage, propaganda, and fake news to undermine American democracy in the 2016 election, and now that it is clear that there were high-level contacts between Trump associates and officials of the Russian Government, it is no longer being denied by anybody on either side of the aisle. What I have started to hear is, well, sure, they tried to hack our election, and, sure, they leaked thousands of emails, and, sure, they changed the dynamics of the campaign and what people were talking about in the campaign, but there is no proof that they stuffed any ballot boxes or they hacked into the computers. And that is true; we don't know that they stuffed any ballot boxes or hacked into computers, and we will have to see if anything comes out about that when we finally get to do a real comprehensive investigation. But, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we should be terrified and appalled and outraged that they were allowed to go as far as they did.

How many people in this body would accept a foreign entity coming into our congressional districts and spending millions or hundreds of thousands of dollars against us, hacking into our computers, releasing our emails, and completely changing the dynamics of the campaign?

So when I hear from colleagues that, well, yes, they distorted the campaign, they hacked into the campaign, but they didn't steal the election, I think that they are making a distinction with no difference at all. If you derail the campaign, you kidnap the campaign, you hijack the campaign, you have altered the outcome of the election, especially one in which your opponent gets 2.9 million votes more than you did, especially in an election where you were able to torture out only the slenderest of electoral college victories in three States by 70,000 votes.

□ 1730

So I simply reject the constant claim that I am hearing from colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that we don't need to worry about Russian subversion of the 2016 election because it only affected the campaign; it didn't necessarily affect the election outcome. To influence the campaign is to influence the election outcome.

Mr. Speaker, I am seeing Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE is not here, so I yield back the balance of my time.

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, we see so much on TV. I was watching the President's press conference a little while ago. We see so much discord out there, and this opportunity that we have in the afternoon to really delve deep into the issues is so valuable to me. It is one of the only opportunities that the American people get to see us delving deeply into the issues.

You and I know that we are in the committee room, we are behind closed doors in a bipartisan way grappling with all of the hardest issues that face American families, but folks don't see it and they don't feel it. Why it is we celebrate the discord instead of celebrating the discourse is a mystery to me.

I bring, Mr. Speaker, today some stories about the Affordable Care Act from my district at home. It is not going to be a surprise to you that these are stories of challenges.

In Cumming, Georgia—it is up in Forsyth County, Georgia, just north of

Atlanta—I heard from a single mom. She has two kids, ages 11 and 13. They have a family physician that they want to hang on to.

She says: I work part-time as a paralegal. I earn $25,000 a year, and I also receive child support payments.

She said that she was encouraged by a health insurance company to go out and enroll in Medicaid instead, but neither of her children's doctors accept Medicaid.

How often do we hear that?

The solution for everything is to dump everyone into Medicaid. Medicaid is not a healthcare system. It is a healthcare payment system. You have to find a doctor who will accept a payment. This young woman's doctors do not.

She said she went on healthcare.gov, filled out an application, and was offered a plan for $464 a month with a $12,600 deductible. She makes $25,000 a year, and what we have offered her is a $500-a-month policy, $464 a month, with a $12,000 deductible. That is not affordable, she said. She called an insurance broker and looked for a similar policy. They were priced the same way.

She said: I have decided to pay the ObamaCare fines instead.

Mr. Speaker, I tell this story because I know that every single Member of this body wants to serve the constituency that sent them here. Every single Member of this body wants to find solutions for folks back home.

As we look at the numbers across the country, we find that more Americans that we purported to help with the Affordable Care Act have decided to pay a fine instead of join the exchange system.

Mr. Speaker, we have more Americans opting out of the system than opting into the system because we have failed those very people we purported to help.

From Buford, Georgia, Mr. Speaker: I'm a full-time student with a part-time job that doesn't offer health or dental insurance. I can't get health insurance through my parents because they are on Medicare. I shopped for health plans, but all of the ones on the exchange are out of my budget. I shouldn't have to pay a fine because I can't afford health care.

Now, think about that, Mr. Speaker. This young student says: I shouldn't have to pay a fine because I can't afford the health care. If I can't afford the health care, I certainly can't afford the fine.

These are the people that we purported to help with the Affordable Care Act, and they are not being served.

Back in Cumming, Georgia, Mr. Speaker: Today I have been in my office for hours trying to find affordable health care that accommodates my primary care physician. Prices start for me at $750-plus. Before ObamaCare, I was paying $365 with more access to doctors.

It is not just about the money, Mr. Speaker. These networks, as you know, are closing. More than one-third of the counties in America have no choice of insurance whatsoever. The networks are narrowing. Folks are not just finding it hard to pay for care, but they are finding it hard to choose their physician.

A retired couple in Peachtree Corners, Mr. Speaker: I retired last year, and my husband retired this year. Both of us are in our sixties. We knew we would have to pay a lot for health insurance, but I was stunned when we signed up for the Affordable Care Act to the tune of more than $1,200 per month. I recently received a notice from our insurer that premiums for 2017 will go to over $2,000 per month.

This family played by the rules their entire life, Mr. Speaker. They retired, needed access to health care, and went to the exchanges that were purported to help people find affordable health care. They found a $1,200-a-month policy that this year rises to $2,000 a month.

I say this to the young people planning for their retirement and thinking about putting something away for a rainy day: This couple pays $2,000 a month simply for their premium.

Another family in Cumming, Georgia, Mr. Speaker: Six years ago, we had a perfectly acceptable high-deductible plan with an HSA for $300 a month. As ObamaCare has been implemented, it has gone from $300 to $450 to $950 per month, and our only remaining option is a $1,450-per-month plan that provides effectively the same coverage.

Mr. Speaker, I added that one because these folks weren't looking for help. These folks weren't uninsured. These folks didn't have a problem finding insurance. They had it under control themselves. In the name of helping the uninsured, the Affordable Care Act came in, re-regulated the entire insurance industry, even for people who already had health care, and drove this family's premiums from $300 a month to $1,400 a month.

Mr. Speaker, who defends these things? Who defends these things?

I tell you, I will not have a colleague from the Democratic side or the Republican side who would say that any of these consequences were intended when the Affordable Care Act was passed. They might have been inevitable, but they were not intended.

So we can agree there is a problem. We can agree there is a problem. And if you don't think that we can agree, let me refer first to former President Barack Obama. Just last fall, he said this: Despite this progress, too many Americans still strain to pay for their physician visits and prescriptions, cover their deductibles or pay their monthly insurance bills. They struggle to navigate a complex, sometimes bewildering system, and they remain uninsured.

That's right. They remain uninsured. The trillion-plus dollars that we spent to solve the issue of the uninsured solved nothing. We continue to have a problem with the uninsured, yet we have added problems to those who are insured.

Democratic Governor Mark Dayton from Minnesota in October of last year, Mr. Speaker: The reality is the Affordable Care Act is no longer affordable.

The reality is the Affordable Care Act is no longer affordable—these are words of folks who supported the Affordable Care Act.

Former President Bill Clinton: ''So you've got this crazy system where all of a sudden 25 million more people have health care and then the people who are out there busting it, sometimes 60 hours a week, wind up with their premiums doubled with their coverage cut in half. It's the craziest thing in the world.''

There is a group of people, mostly small-business owners and employees, who make just a little too much to qualify for Medicaid expansion or for the tax incentives who can't get Affordable Care Act premiums in a lot of places.

Former President Bill Clinton says that there are guys out there busting 60 hours a week trying to make it work for their families, and we have failed them.

It is not that they had a problem to begin with. Many of these folks had insurance that they liked to begin with. We failed them when we re-regulated them into problems instead of solving problems.

Mr. Speaker, the broken promises began right away. You will remember the fact check organization that named ''If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan'' as the Lie of the Year.

Overpromising and underdelivering has been the nature of ObamaCare. We were promised premiums would decline by $2,500. The average family premium has increased by $4,300. We were promised the cost of health care would go down, but deductibles have risen more than 60 percent. We were promised you can keep your doctor, but 70 percent of us find ourselves in narrower networks today than we did before. Middle class Americans were promised we wouldn't see a tax increase, but as we just heard from this young student, when you can't find a plan that meets your needs, then you are fined by the IRS. You are paying taxes right then.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not blaming these systemic problems on President Obama. I am not blaming these systemic problems on the Affordable Care Act. What I am doing is pointing out that we passed the Affordable Care Act with $1 trillion in new tax increases and with a re-regulation of all of the insurance plans that people liked before in the name of solving these problems, which we did not solve.

I will take you to my home State of Georgia, Mr. Speaker. On average, 32 percent is the increase that we are seeing in premiums on our exchange—32 percent this year alone. Of the folks

who are participating in the exchange, Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of them receive a government subsidy.

Let me say that again: Of the folks who participate in the $1 trillion Affordable Care Act exchange program in the State of Georgia, 80 percent of them do so because the government is paying for their health care. That is a pretty good incentive to get in the system. If you're going to get a subsidy payment, folks are in the system. Eighty percent require that subsidy in order to be enticed into the system.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, more people rejected going into the system opting instead for no health care than went into the system with the Affordable Care Act.

The average wage earner in Georgia, Mr. Speaker, gets no subsidy from the government. Four hundred percent of the poverty line, as you know, is where that subsidy kicks in. That is about $48,000 a year in the State of Georgia. I am telling you, if you earn $48,000 a year, you have bills, obligations, and responsibilities, and you find yourself in one of these $2,000-a-month premium situations that this retired couple in Georgia did, you cannot afford health insurance—or at least you cannot afford the health insurance that the government today is requiring that you have.

Let's think about those requirements, Mr. Speaker. The government, in its wisdom, decided it was going to force folks into plans that it deemed appropriate. Many of those came in the form of healthcare CO-OPs. It was certainly a reasonable idea: let's allow folks in States back home to join together and provide health insurance.

We sucked folks into those CO-OPs, Mr. Speaker. Again, an unsustainable system, this death spiral of ObamaCare. One million folks were sucked into CO-OPs that went belly up, Mr. Speaker. They lost their insurance once when ObamaCare came into business, and they lost their insurance again when these CO-OPs failed.

As you can see on this map, the orange CO-OPs have failed. Only a few remain in business today. It remains to be seen if they will make it through the year.

When we talk about choice, Mr. Speaker, five States have only one insurer in the exchange. That was the whole point of the exchange. That is why we spent literally billions upon billions to set up these exchanges so that consumers could compare and choose.

Now, two things went wrong. Number one, we set up this list of mandates that every insurance plan had to comply with, which disincentivized folks to join those plans to begin with. Then, number two, by setting up what you had to have in a plan, you, by definition, restricted the choice of individuals to choose what they want. So you end up with five States with only one insurer under ObamaCare.

Now, that is before the announcement this week from Humana that it is withdrawing from all of the ObamaCare plans at the end of 2017. That was before the announcement this week from the Aetna CEO that he sees the death spiral that ObamaCare is involved in—his words—and it remains to be seen whether they will participate next year or not.

I don't need to find consensus among 218 Members or even 435 Members about whether or not ObamaCare is succeeding or failing.

□ 1745

What I need is for folks to look at the 19 million uninsured Americans who had an opportunity to go into this trillion-dollar system; an opportunity to reach for the golden ring, as it was described by its authors and its proponents, and they said: No. They said: It doesn't work for me. They said: It is not the right thing for me. They said: It doesn't fit into my families' needs and desires and expectations.

Of these 19 million, Mr. Speaker, 6.5 million paid a tax penalty. That is 6.5 million Americans failed by their government in a trillion-dollar healthcare regulation, failed by their government in an expansion through ObamaCare and Medicaid, and failed by their government yet again when they received a bill because the trillion-dollar program we put together didn't work for them and their families.

Can't we agree that if our goal was to solve the problem of the uninsured American, having 19 million Americans who would rather stay uninsured than participate in the Affordable Care Act is the definition of failure?

We can do better. There is a better way, Mr. Speaker, let there be no mistake about that.

I know there is a lot of anxiety out there. I don't want to minimize that. Fear is a corrosive emotion to have. I want to do my very best to allay the fear of anyone in America, Mr. Speaker, who is benefiting from the Affordable Care Act. As these numbers have demonstrated, there are not many. But if you spend a trillion dollars and re-regulate an entire industry, I certainly hope there is at least one family out there who got something out of it. I know that there are.

I quote GREG WALDEN, the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. Speaker, who, as you know, has wide jurisdiction for re-regulating health care. He says this in January of this year: ''We want to make sure that people with pre-existing conditions continue to get covered.''

Mr. Speaker, it is a myth that Congress didn't care about preexisting conditions. It was Republicans in Congress, led by Republican Newt Gingrich of the great State of Georgia, who abolished preexisting conditions in every federally regulated plan back in 1996. He did that in partnership with Bill Clinton.

What you have heard from our chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee is that we are committed to dealing with preexisting conditions. Take that anxiety off your list.

From Tom Price, now the Secretary of Health and Human Services: ''Nobody is interested in pulling the rug out from anybody.''

We believe that it is absolutely imperative that individuals who have health care be able to keep health coverage and move, hopefully, to greater choices and opportunity for them to gain the kind of coverage that they want for themselves and their families.

There has been a lot of talk about individuals losing health care. That is not our goal, nor is it our desire, nor is it our plan. The new Secretary of Health and Human Services said that this year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to overpromise and underdeliver. ObamaCare is failing. The exchanges are failing. Insurance companies are leaving. Plans are being canceled.

I am not saying that if you like your plan, you can keep it. Your plan may be one of the overly regulated, overly priced plans that is collapsing across this country. What I am saying to you is, our commitment is to help and not hurt in that area.

I cannot prevent ObamaCare from failing. I cannot prevent your plan from going away, but I can provide an off ramp for you and your family so that you can find, as Secretary Price says, better choices and better opportunities.

From the United States Senate, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL: ''There will be a stable transition period, and once repeal is passed we will turn to replacement policies that cost less and work better than what we have now.''

Some contend that, by fulfilling our promise to the American people, we are somehow going to go back to the way things were before ObamaCare, which we all know is untrue.

If your family grappled with preexisting conditions because your State didn't address it the same way the Federal Government did back in 1996—folks are committed, if you are playing by the rules, to stick with you and your family through this transition.

If your family benefits from the raising of the lifetime caps that was a part of the Affordable Care Act, you have won that debate. You needn't worry as we go through this transition.

If you like the fact that your kids are unemployed and staying on your policy until they are 26 years old, I think you have won that debate. I think that is absolutely going to be a part of that conversation in this transition.

If you have a fear, if you have a worry, if you have a concern, I don't want to minimize it. I want to allay it. But come and share it with your Member of Congress, share it with your United States Senator. We have a group of leaders committed to addressing those concerns.

Finally, PAUL RYAN, our Speaker of the House: ''We can and should have a

system in this country where everybody can have access to affordable health care, including people with preexisting conditions.''

There are things that unite us in this body, and one of those things is caring for people, caring about people, wanting folks to get a fair shake. If you have played by the rules, you deserve a fair shake. That brings us all together in this institution.

I don't want any family to find themselves in fear that they are being forgotten in this transition, but there is a very real fear that, if you are in an Affordable Care Act plan today, that plan will fail.

Mr. Speaker, there are two things we can do. We can pretend that failure is not imminent. You can look at all the insurers withdrawing from ObamaCare, you can look at all of the rate increases going up in double digits, you can look at all of the folks who are opting out because it has gotten too expensive and doesn't serve their families' needs.

You can see the failure of ObamaCare. But the number of options that we have, the number of plans under discussion to replace it is numerous, Mr. Speaker. We have got the Better Way healthcare plan, we have got the American Health Care Reform Act, we have got the Empowering Patients First, we have got our Rules Committee chairman's The World's Great Healthcare Plan Act, the Patient Freedom Act, the ObamaCare Replacement Act.

Mr. Speaker, we have options. To begin to get to those options, we need to be honest with ourselves, whether we opposed ObamaCare from the beginning or whether we hoped it was going to be the best thing since sliced bread, that ObamaCare has failed.

With that recognition, we can repeal those costly mandates, we can repeal those constrictive agreements, we can repeal those things that have isolated us from choice, that have separated us from our doctors, and we can begin to restore a patient-centered, family first system.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that you are a smart man. I have no doubt that you work hard from dawn to dusk every day. But no matter how hard you work, I promise you that you will not know better than the families in my district which healthcare plan is best for them, and I appreciate you not trying to second guess them.

I cannot make everybody in America happy, Mr. Speaker, but I can give everybody in America the choice to make themselves happy. I can't empower families in America to make their own choices, their own decisions about what works best for them.

Put your mind at ease. For folks who have concerns, we hear you. For folks who have been hurt, we are coming for you. And for folks who know there is a better way, we stand with you.

It is going to be a long spring and summer, Mr. Speaker, because this is only heavy lifting, but it is the right thing to do, and we have got the right group of men and women here to do it.

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

FRIDAY NIGHT IN CAIRO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, as we gather tonight in the historic House Chamber, where so much of our Nation's history has been debated and dispatched, it is good to hear my friend from Georgia talk about the challenges that face our country with the failure of the Affordable Care Act and his thoughtful presentation on just precisely what we need to do to save Americans from the failures of this bad law.

It is an honor to be in the historic House Chamber where every day the distinguished lawgivers in our history look down on this Chamber. George Mason, who wrote the Virginia Declaration of Rights, looks down on the Speaker's dais, as does Thomas Jefferson, the author of our Declaration of Independence.

No speaker stands at the dais and addresses the people's House without the steely gaze of Moses, the ultimate, most revered lawmaker, Mr. Speaker. He looks down on you and on this Chamber for truth and justice.

Mr. Speaker, we Americans work hard. We work hard every day of the week, and we love Friday. We love Fridays so much that we say: Thank God it's Friday. Over the years, TGIF has become not only something that everyone in our country who works hard recognizes, but it became the name of a popular restaurant.

In the autumn, we love our Friday nights watching high school football. In the winter, maybe it is catching a movie and eating a pizza with our friends or family. In the spring, Friday can find us catching a baseball game, the American pastime.

Mr. Speaker, last Friday night, I was in Cairo, Egypt, and what I saw was that same joyous, happy experience of families sharing their successes of the week; celebrating a great soccer victory; clapping to wonderful, warm local music; and witnessing the squealing of their kids running around their parents, celebrating a birthday or just a good week at work or school.

The streets of the Khan el-Khalili Bazaar in Cairo were chock-full last Friday, Mr. Speaker, with the living and the loving, just going about that weekly experience pursuing their own version of happiness and TGIF.

Friday night in Cairo, the land of the Pharaoh, the land of the beginning of much of human education and civilization, there was dining and bargaining in the bizarre that has been the centerpiece of trading and manufacturing and merchandising for half a millennia.

Mr. Speaker, my trip to Egypt was marked not just with witnessing the joy of Egyptian family life and seeing and sharing what we have in common. It was a reminder that the 91 million Egyptians are on the front line of the global war on terror, a war that unites the leadership of Egypt and the United States arm-in-arm to design and implement the most effective strategies we can to defeat the malevolent evil enemy of ISIS, al-Qaida, Boko Haram, and their bloody cohorts across the globe.

In my view, after the approach of the past 8 years, our enemies are stronger and engaged more broadly than ever before. Nothing has driven this point home more than a visit in Cairo to the St. Peter and St. Paul's Coptic Church.

Located on the plaza adjacent to the offices of His Holiness Coptic Pope Tawadros II, there was joy there last Saturday morning, Mr. Speaker, listening to the chants of the priests, the reverence of the families in the pews, the kids again squealing and smiling in their parents' arms.

But, Mr. Speaker, on the periphery of that joy was a stark reminder of the destruction there on December 11, when a male ISIS jihadist suicide bomber entered that church disguised as a woman and detonated his vest, murdering 25, mostly women, splattering the walls and the floors of God's House with their blood.

As I walked through that same entrance last Saturday, Mr. Speaker, the church has developed a reverent shrine to those who were lost. The pockmarks in the marble are there from the shrapnel from the vest.

□ 1800

But that church is a symbol of unity in Egypt, not division, as it was visited by President el-Sisi, a devout Muslim leader of all Egyptians, who came to share his concern, his affection for Egyptians no matter what their religious background. Best summarized by the wise Pope of the Coptic church—Mr. Speaker, we have to remind ourselves that the word ''Coptic,'' of course, comes from the Greek word ''aigyptios,'' which means Egypt. The Coptic church is as old as St. Mark's arrival in Alexandria in the first century.

That wise old Pope told us, and I think really, Mr. Speaker, captured the whole spirit of the Egyptian people and the resolve that is taking place in that country under President el-Sisi when he said, Egyptians take two things from the Nile River on which they have lived some 5,000 years. They take water, and they take moderation in their beliefs.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I wanted to come to the House Chamber and pay tribute to the Egyptian people for being on those front lines in the fight against radical Islamic terrorism, pay tribute to the Christian and Muslim people of Egypt working together to defeat this ideology. I want to commend President el-Sisi for his courageous leadership in the Muslim world.

Coinciding with the birthday celebration of the Prophet Muhammad on New Year's Day 2015, President el-Sisi went to the Islamic world's most respected institution, Al-Azhar University, and called upon the world's 1.6 billion faithful Muslims and the faith's imams to support a religious revolution. He called on the leaders to reject the mindset of death and jihad.

Mr. Speaker, in both Egypt and America, we come from dust and to dust we shall return. We are made in God's image, and God has granted us such unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. While we are breathing, each of us has an obligation to serve our fellow man, work to value our societies and make them the best that they can be.

In January, we witnessed a change in leadership here in the United States. We had a former President who grew up in Hawaii and grew up riding the waves in Hawaii. He rode a wave into the White House and then drifted along, bobbing on top of those waves for 8 years. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a President in the White House who is not riding the waves; he is making waves. It is my hope that he will execute a new direction and take new actions to win the global war on terrorism.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, whether it takes 3 months or 30 years, I won't rest until we unify the civilized world to reject jihad, reject the terror we saw at St. Peter and St. Paul's Church in Cairo. Mr. Speaker, we need to condemn those who condone it. We need to condemn those who finance it. We need to reject it when we see it taught in the mosque. We need to reject it on Facebook. We need to reject it in the media. We must condemn those who say it is wrong but stand silent.

Mr. Speaker, there are no bystanders in this fight, and there is no substitute for victory. Mr. Speaker, all across the world tonight, we Egyptians, we Americans, we want our Fridays back. TGIF, Mr. Speaker, TGIF.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CURBELO of Florida (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of family obligations.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a joint resolution of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.J. Res. 40. Joint resolution 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, February 17, 2017, at 1 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

577. A letter from the Principal Civilian Deputy ASN(RD&A), Department of the Navy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Navy's annual report to Congress on Repair of Naval Vessels in Foreign Shipyards, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 7310(c); Public Law 110-417, Sec. 1012; (122 Stat. 4584); to the Committee on Armed Services.

578. A letter from the Chair, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Board's semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress, pursuant to Public Law 106-569; to the Committee on Financial Services.

579. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Food and Drug Administration's FY 2016 Performance Report to Congress for the Generic Drug User Fee Amendments; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

580. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, CDC, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Control of Communicable Diseases; Delay of Effective Date [Docket No.: CDC-2016-0068] (RIN: 0920-AA63) received February 14, 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.

581. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's withdrawal of direct final rule — Revisions to Procedure 2 — Quality Assurance Requirements for Particulate Matter Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems at Stationary Sources [EPA-HQ-OAR-2016-0382; FRL-9959-43-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AT15) received February 13, 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.

582. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Thiamethoxam; Pesticide Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0705; FRL-9957-00] received February 13, 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.

583. A letter from the Director, National Science Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's Fiscal Year 2016 Agency Financial Report, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a)(1); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 107-289, Sec. 2(a)); (116 Stat. 2049); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

584. A letter from the Regulatory Liaison Officer, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Leasing of Sulfur or Oil and Gas in the Outer Continental Shelf [Docket ID: BOEM-2016-0031] (RIN: 1010-AD06) received February 15, 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.

585. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Oil and Gas and Sulphur Operations in the Outer Continental Shelf-Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments [Docket ID: BOEM-2016-0055] (RIN: 1010-AD95) received February 15, 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.

586. A letter from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting the Report of the Proceedings of the Judicial Conference of the United States for the September 2016 session; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

587. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's temporary rule — Implementation of Statutory Amendments Requiring the Modification of the Definition of Hard Cider [Docket No.: TTB-2016-0014; T.D. TTB-147; Re: Notice No.: 168] (RIN: 1513-AC31) received February 15, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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. THORNBERRY: Committee on Armed Services. H.R. 393. A bill to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces (Rept. 115–13). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself and Mr. WALBERG):

H.R. 1101. A bill to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to improve access and choice for entrepreneurs with small businesses with respect to medical care for their employees; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. LOFGREN (for herself, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CLAY, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. ESTY, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. LEE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. PELOSI, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr.

SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, and Mr. NOLAN):

H.R. 1102. A bill to require States to conduct Congressional redistricting through independent commissions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. HARTZLER, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. SOTO, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. ROYCE of California, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. HECK):

H.R. 1103. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for garnishment pursuant to a court order to satisfy a judgment against a retired member of the uniformed services for physically, sexually, or emotionally abusing a child; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana (for herself and Miss RICE of New York):

H.R. 1104. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for pro-rated charges to entitlement to educational assistance under Department of Veterans Affairs Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for certain licensure and certification tests and national tests, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. ALLEN:

H.R. 1105. A bill to repeal the rule entitled ''Clean Water Rule: Definition of 'Waters of the United States' ''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. AMODEI:

H.R. 1106. A bill to provide for the conveyance of small parcels of National Forest System land and small parcels of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management to private landowners, State, county, and local governments, or Indian tribes whose lands share a boundary with the National Forest System land or public lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, 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. AMODEI (for himself and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 1107. A bill to promote conservation, improve public land management, and provide for sensible development in Pershing County, Nevada, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 1108. A bill to provide for the mandatory recall of drugs regulated by the Food and Drug Administration; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. MCNERNEY, and Mr. MULLIN):

H.R. 1109. A bill to amend section 203 of the Federal Power Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. AMASH, and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 1110. A bill to repeal certain amendments made to rule 41 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Ms. MOORE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. RUSH, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SOTO, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POLIS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 1111. A bill to establish a Department of Peacebuilding, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LABRADOR (for himself, Mr. JONES, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. BRAT, Mr. KATKO, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico):

H.R. 1112. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the transfer of unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits to additional dependents upon the death of the originally designated dependent; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 1113. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to ensure that the receipts and disbursements of the Social Security trust funds are not included in a unified Federal budget and to provide that Social Security contributions are used to protect Social Security solvency by mandating that Trust Fund monies cannot be diverted to create private accounts; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. NORTON, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. LEE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. TONKO):

H.R. 1114. A bill to enhance Social Security benefits and ensure the long-term solvency of the Social Security program; 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. HULTGREN (for himself, Mr. NEAL, and Mr. RENACCI):

H.R. 1115. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify certain rules applicable to qualified small issue manufacturing bonds; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIPTON (for himself, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. POSEY, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. TROTT, and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 1116. A bill to require the Federal financial institutions regulatory agencies to take risk profiles and business models of institutions into account when taking regulatory actions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. HARTZLER:

H.R. 1117. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit a report regarding certain plans regarding assistance to applicants and grantees during the response to an emergency or disaster; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. FARENTHOLD (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, and Mr. SMITH of Texas):

H.R. 1118. A bill to prevent undue disruption of interstate commerce by limiting civil actions brought against persons whose only role with regard to a product in the stream of commerce is as a lawful seller of the product; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROTHFUS (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1119. A bill to establish the bases by which the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall issue, implement, and enforce certain emission limitations and allocations for existing electric utility steam generating units that convert coal refuse into energy; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCKINLEY, Ms. MENG, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Ms. TSONGAS):

H.R. 1120. A bill to promote and ensure delivery of high quality special education and related services to students with visual disabilities or who are deaf or hard of hearing or deaf-blind through instructional methodologies meeting their unique learning needs; to enhance accountability for the provision of such services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. WALDEN (for himself, Mr. LATTA, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. LANCE, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mrs. WAGNER, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. POLIQUIN, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. HARPER, Mr. UPTON, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. FLORES, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1121. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit application of pre-existing condition exclusions and to guarantee availability of health insurance coverage in the individual and group market, contingent on the enactment of legislation repealing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education

and the Workforce, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. KIND):

H.R. 1122. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for clarification and rationalization of Medicare prescription drug plan recovery rules for certain claims; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Mr. BYRNE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mr. HILL):

H.R. 1123. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to modify certain provisions relating to the capital financing of historically Black colleges and universities; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BABIN (for himself and Mr. MCCLINTOCK):

H.R. 1124. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Treasury and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System from providing bailouts or other financial assistance to a pension plan of a State or political subdivision thereof, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1125. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for new procedures pertaining to the processing of petitions and applications for immigrant or nonimmigrant visas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, 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. BARR (for himself, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. COMER, Mr. MASSIE, and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky):

H.R. 1126. A bill to exempt the aging process of distilled spirits from the production period for purposes of capitalization of interest costs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. BASS:

H.R. 1127. A bill to increase purchasing power, strengthen economic recovery, and restore fairness in financing higher education in the United States through student loan forgiveness, caps on interest rates on Federal student loans, and refinancing opportunities for private borrowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. MOORE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Ms. JACKSON LEE):

H.R. 1128. A bill to assist survivors of stroke and other debilitating health occurrences in returning to work; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 1129. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to strengthen student visa background checks and improve the monitoring of foreign students in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BLACK (for herself, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. COOPER, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee, and Mr. ADERHOLT):

H.R. 1130. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure fairness in Medicare hospital payments by establishing a floor for the area wage index applied with respect to certain hospitals; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BOST (for himself, Mr. COSTA, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. SHUSTER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mrs. HARTZLER, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. BERGMAN, Ms. GABBARD, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. LOWENTHAL):

H.R. 1131. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a plan to hire directors of the medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BUCK (for himself, Mr. TED LIEU of California, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 1132. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a 2 year prohibition on employment in a career civil service position for any former political appointee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. CARTER of Texas (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. FLORES, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. YOHO, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. JONES, Mr. COLE, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. HURD, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. OLSON, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. COOK, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. BABIN, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. MARINO, Ms. GRANGER, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. CALVERT, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. LONG, and Mr. MACARTHUR):

H.R. 1133. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for an operation on a live donor for purposes of conducting a transplant procedure for a veteran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. ESTY, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HECK, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KIHUEN, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. QUIGLEY, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SOTO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. WELCH, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. HIMES, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. SIRES, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. COSTA, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. GABBARD, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Mr. RASKIN):

H.R. 1134. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to provide for additional disclosure requirements for corporations, labor organizations, and other entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BASS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. EVANS, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. LEE, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MOORE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. VEASEY, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mrs. LOVE, and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California):

H.R. 1135. A bill to reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. COLE (for himself and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia):

H.R. 1136. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for a certain effective date with respect to deemed tobacco products, to provide for the establishment of product standards for vapor product batteries, to provide for regulation of vapor products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (for himself, Ms. CHENEY, and Mr. BABIN):

H.R. 1137. A bill to amend the Arms Export Control Act to provide that certain firearms listed as curios or relics may be imported into the United States by a licensed importer without obtaining authorization from the Department of State or the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COOK (for himself, Mr. ROYCE of California, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. AGUILAR):

H.R. 1138. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a criminal penalty for launching drones that interfere with fighting wildfires affecting Federal property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRAMER:

H.R. 1139. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to protect low-income Lifeline subscribers by mandating a continuing role for States in designating eligible telecommunications carriers for participation in the Universal Service program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DELANEY:

H.R. 1140. A bill to provide additional funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and improve upon the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey):

H.R. 1141. A bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to ensure that all dogs and cats used by research facilities are obtained legally; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. CULBERSON, and Mr. FLEISCHMANN):

H.R. 1142. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick ''Roddie'' Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions during World War II; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico):

H.R. 1143. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to address the increased burden that maintaining the health and hygiene of infants and toddlers places on families in need, the resultant adverse health effects on children and families, and the limited child care options available for infants and toddlers who lack sufficient diapers; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. POCAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. NORTON, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. TAKANO):

H.R. 1144. A bill to impose a tax on certain trading transactions to invest in our families and communities, improve our infrastructure and our environment, strengthen our financial security, expand opportunity and reduce market volatility; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself and Mr. PAULSEN):

H.R. 1145. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to qualify homeless youth and veterans who are full-time students for purposes of the low income housing tax credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 1146. A bill to require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to establish a pilot program to make grants to eligible organizations to provide legal assistance to low-income families regarding housing disputes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. ESTY (for herself and Mrs. WALORSKI):

H.R. 1147. A bill to provide for the issuance of a Families of Fallen Heroes Semipostal Stamp; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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. GRIFFITH (for himself, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. BABIN, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio):

H.R. 1148. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to telehealth-eligible stroke services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. JONES, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BRAT, and Mr. MARCHANT):

H.R. 1149. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make changes related to family-sponsored immigrants and to reduce the number of such immigrants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HOLDING (for himself and Mr. PETERSON):

H.R. 1150. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on indoor tanning services; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 1151. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to encourage the prioritization of the most vulnerable individuals under the Medicaid program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HUDSON (for himself and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER):

H.R. 1152. A bill to eliminate the sunset date for the Veterans Choice Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand eligibility for such program, and to extend certain operating hours for pharmacies and medical facilities of the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HUIZENGA (for himself, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. MEEKS, and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio):

H.R. 1153. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to improve upon the definitions provided for points and fees in connection with a mortgage transaction; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. HUNTER (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. BOST, Mr. HARPER, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. BABIN, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, and Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota):

H.R. 1154. A bill to provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a commercial vessel; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas (for herself and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia):

H.R. 1155. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. FLORES, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. COLE, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. OLSON, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. BARTON, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. HILL, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1156. A bill to repeal changes made by health care reform laws to the Medicare exception to the prohibition on certain physician referrals for hospitals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 1157. A bill to clarify the United States interest in certain submerged lands in the area of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. HARPER, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. TURNER, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. KIND, Mr. BYRNE, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. TIBERI):

H.R. 1158. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Mr. VEASEY):

H.R. 1159. A bill to provide for continuing cooperation between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Israel Space Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 1160. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the way beneficiaries are assigned under the Medicare shared savings program by also basing such assignment on primary care services furnished by nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and clinical nurse specialists; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KINZINGER (for himself, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BOST, and Mr. LAHOOD):

H.R. 1161. A bill to include Livingston County, the city of Jonesboro in Union County, and the city of Freeport in Stephenson County, Illinois, to the Lincoln National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KNIGHT (for himself, Mr. HECK, Mr. JONES, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. STEWART, Mr. KEATING, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. STEFANIK, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. BYRNE, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. COLE, Mr. BACON, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. PERRY, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. SOTO, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. COOK, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. MCCARTHY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H.R. 1162. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire (for herself, Mr. CRAWFORD, and Mr. ABRAHAM):

H.R. 1163. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to exempt certain recipients of Department of Agriculture conservation assistance from certain reporting requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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. LAMBORN (for himself and Mr. ZELDIN):

H.R. 1164. A bill to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H.R. 1165. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exclusion from gross income for AmeriCorps educational awards; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LONG:

H.R. 1166. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide greater State flexibility and innovation through Medicaid cost-sharing waivers; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. LOVE (for herself, Mr. RUSH, and Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS):

H.R. 1167. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to promote physician training in newly recognized primary medical specialties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. LOWEY (for herself, Mr. LANCE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. DELAURO, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 1168. A bill to provide that service of the members of the organization known as the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II constituted active military service for purposes of laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and 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. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SOTO, Mr. COOK, Mr. COLE, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. ISSA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. KIND, Ms. NORTON, Mr. POCAN, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. HUFFMAN):

H.R. 1169. A bill 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; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. YOHO, Mr. WALKER, and Mr. PALMER):

H.R. 1170. A bill to require each Federal agency to review rules made after the enactment of the Congressional Review Act to ensure that all such rules were made in compliance with the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MOULTON (for himself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. HECK, Mr. JONES, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KILMER, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. TONKO, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. SWALWELL of California):

H.R. 1171. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five month waiting period for disability insurance benefits for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. NEAL (for himself, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KIND, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. CICILLINE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. HIMES, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. NADLER, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. TSONGAS, and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California):

H.R. 1172. A bill to require the President to disclose income, assets, and liabilities associated with countries with which the United States is negotiating a trade or investment agreement, countries subject to presidential determinations in trade enforcement actions, and countries eligible for trade preference programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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 Mrs. NOEM (for herself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, and Mr. MULLIN):

H.R. 1173. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for treatment of clinical psychologists as physicians for purposes of furnishing clinical psychologist services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. NORTON (for herself, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia):

H.R. 1174. A bill to provide a lactation room in public buildings; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 1175. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve access to health care through expanded health savings accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. PINGREE (for herself and Mr. WITTMAN):

H.R. 1176. A bill to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 to establish a Working Waterfront Task Force and a working waterfronts grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. POLIQUIN:

H.R. 1177. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to release on behalf of the United States the condition that certain lands conveyed to the City of Old Town, Maine, be used for a municipal airport, and

for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. POSEY (for himself, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. BABIN):

H.R. 1178. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the diversity immigrant program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RICE of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. BRAT, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. YOHO, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. PERRY, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. STEWART, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. BIGGS, and Mr. ABRAHAM):

H.R. 1179. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act with respect to citizen suits and the specification of disposal sites, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. ROBY:

H.R. 1180. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide compensatory time for employees in the private sector; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. WENSTRUP):

H.R. 1181. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. ROGERS of Alabama (for himself and Mr. POE of Texas):

H.R. 1182. A bill to require certain actions regarding Russian Federation noncompliance with the INF Treaty, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), 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. RUIZ (for himself, Mr. POLIS, Mr. COOK, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 1183. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to improve mitigation assistance; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. RUSH (for himself, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 1184. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require the Federal Communications Commission to prescribe rules regulating inmate telephone and video service rates, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 1185. A bill to amend titles 10 and 41, United States Code, to provide a contracting preference for contractors that retain American jobs and purchase goods and services in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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. RYAN of Ohio (for himself, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. POCAN, and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H.R. 1186. A bill to amend the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to increase the percentage of loans guaranteed for small business concerns that are manufacturers; to the Committee on Small Business, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER:

H.R. 1187. A bill to expand the research activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to functional gastrointestinal and motility disorders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER (for himself, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 1188. A bill to reauthorize certain programs established by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SERRANO:

H.R. 1189. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to provide greater access to the supplemental nutrition assistance program by reducing duplicative and burdensome administrative requirements, authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to award grants to certain community-based nonprofit feeding and anti-hunger groups for the purpose of establishing and implementing a Beyond the Soup Kitchen Pilot Program for certain socially and economically disadvantaged populations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama (for herself, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. ESTY, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. KIND, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. NOLAN, and Mr. KILMER):

H.R. 1190. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for wages paid to employees who participate in qualified apprenticeship programs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. WEBER of Texas):

H.R. 1191. A bill to ensure effective implementation of the Child Soldier Prevention Act of 2008 and hold governments accountable for involving children in armed conflict activities, whether as combatants, servants, or sex slaves; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. FOXX, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. JONES, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. STEWART, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. HILL, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. YODER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BABIN, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. YOHO, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. OLSON, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio):

H.R. 1192. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit dismemberment abortions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TROTT:

H.R. 1193. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize institutions of higher education to provide additional loan counseling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida (for herself, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. RICHMOND, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. MOORE, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. RUSH, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CLAY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 1194. A bill to establish the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, to study and make recommendations to address social problems affecting Black men and boys; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ZELDIN:

H.R. 1195. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to permit striped bass fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone transit zone between Montauk, New York, and Point Judith, Rhode Island, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. ZELDIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 1196. A bill to require a plan to combat international travel by terrorists and foreign fighters, accelerate the transfer of certain border security systems to foreign partner governments, establish minimum international border security standards, authorize the suspension of foreign assistance to countries not making significant efforts to comply with such minimum standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Homeland Security, and 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. HOYER (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. RASKIN, and Mrs. COMSTOCK):

H.J. Res. 76. A joint resolution granting the consent and approval of Congress for the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia to a enter into a compact relating to the establishment of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DUNN (for himself, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida, Mr. ROSS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. MAST, Mr. POSEY, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Mr. BUCHANAN):

H.J. Res. 77. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Army Corps of Engineers relating to the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin Water Control Master Manual; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. COLE, and Ms. MATSUI):

H.J. Res. 78. A joint resolution providing for the reappointment of Stephen M. Case as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. COLE, and Ms. MATSUI):

H.J. Res. 79. A joint resolution providing for the appointment of Michael Govan as a

citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. COLE, and Ms. MATSUI):

H.J. Res. 80. A joint resolution providing for the appointment of Roger W. Ferguson as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Ms. MCCOLLUM:

H.J. Res. 81. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States regarding health care; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WESTERMAN (for himself, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. CRAMER):

H.J. Res. 82. A joint resolution 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 ''Onshore Oil and Gas Operations; Federal and Indian Oil and Gas Leases; Measurement of Oil''; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. LAHOOD (for himself, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. KIND, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. WALZ, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. SIRES, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. REED, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. BOST, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. MESSER, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. COOPER, Mr. COSTA, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. ROUZER, and Mr. BACON):

H. Con. Res. 28. Concurrent resolution establishing a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress; to the Committee on Rules.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Ms. KELLY of Illinois):

H. Con. Res. 29. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the need for increased diversity and inclusion in the tech sector, and increased access to opportunity in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H. Res. 131. A resolution electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. DELAURO, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H. Res. 132. A resolution calling on the President to initiate renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and further calling on the President to consider withdrawing the United States from NAFTA if the renegotiations are not satisfactorily completed within one year; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILLIAMS (for himself, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. JONES, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. TITUS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. FASO):

H. Res. 133. A resolution expressing support for designation of April 11 as ''National Pet Adoption Day'' and the month of April as ''National Pet Adoption Month'' to highlight the important role pets play in the lives of United States citizens; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. COHEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. STIVERS, and Ms. ADAMS):

H. Res. 134. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Black History Month and honoring the outstanding contributions of African-American Medal of Honor recipients; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan (for himself and Mr. TROTT):

H. Res. 135. A resolution urging North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries to meet or exceed the two percent gross domestic product commitment to spending on defense; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana (for himself, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. ESTY, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. LEE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEAL, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. RASKIN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. KHANNA, and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H. Res. 136. A resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals should be protected from discrimination under the law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. COSTA, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KING of New York, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MENG, Mr. MOULTON, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. ROKITA, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. ZELDIN):

H. Res. 137. A resolution honoring the life of Shimon Peres; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself, Mr. LOBIONDO, and Mr. LARSEN of Washington):

H. Res. 138. A resolution recognizing the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. DUFFY:

H. Res. 139. A resolution expressing support for the designation of the week beginning on February 19, 2017, as ''American Birkebeiner Week''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. POCAN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. EVANS, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. MENG, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. BASS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. CLAY, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Mr. PALLONE):

H. Res. 140. A resolution condemning the appointment of Steve Bannon to the National Security Council and urging his immediate removal; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. MENG (for herself and Mr. CROWLEY):

H. Res. 141. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of International Mother Language Day in bringing attention to the importance of preserving linguistic and cultural heritage through education; to the

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself and Mr. KIND):

H. Res. 142. A resolution expressing support for designation of the week of October 29 through November 4, 2017, as ''National Obesity Care Week''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. KILMER, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. PETERS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, and Mr. VARGAS):

H. Res. 143. A resolution recognizing the significance of the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and supporting the goals of the Japanese American, German American, and Italian American communities in recognizing a National Day of Remembrance to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the restriction, exclusion, and incarceration of individuals and families during World War II; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MENG, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. PETERS, Ms. SPEIER, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ):

H. Res. 144. A resolution recognizing the importance of establishing a national ''Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. TORRES (for herself, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. SIRES, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. POE of Texas, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska):

H. Res. 145. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the fight against corruption in Central America; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

4. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Senate of the State of Kansas, relative to Senate Resolution No. 1706, strongly supporting pregnancy maintenance resource centers in their unique, positive contributions to the individual lives of women, men and of babies; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, private bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mrs. DAVIS of California:

H.R. 1197. A bill for the relief of Beloved Jefeti; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. DAVIS of California:

H.R. 1198. A bill for the relief of Flavia Maboloc Cahoon; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H.R. 1199. A bill for the relief of Malachy McAllister, Nicola McAllister, and Sean Ryan McAllister; 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. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 1101.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States), Clause 3 (relating to the power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes), and Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress).

By Ms. LOFGREN:

H.R. 1102.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution of the United States gives Congress the power to enact laws governing the time, place, and manner of elections for Members of the House of Representatives.

Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution gives Congress the power to enact laws to enforce Section 2 of such Amendment, which requires Representatives to be apportioned among the several States according to their number.

By Ms. DELBENE:

H.R. 1103.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1104.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. ALLEN:

H.R. 1105.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. AMODEI:

H.R. 1106.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 14 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. AMODEI:

H.R. 1107.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make rules for the government and. regulation of the land and naval forces, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 14 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 1108.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 1109.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution, Which gives Congress the power to ''regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 1110.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Ms. LEE:

H.R. 1111.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. LABRADOR:

H.R. 1112.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 1113.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 1114.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. HULTGREN:

H.R. 1115.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, providing Congress with the authority to enact legislation necessary to execute one of its enumerated powers.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, as this legislation regulates commerce between the states.

By Mr. TIPTON:

H.R. 1116.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''The Congress shall have power . . . To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Mrs. HARTZLER:

H.R. 1117.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I: Section 8: Clause 3 The United States Congress shall have power

''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. FARENTHOLD:

H.R. 1118.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clauses 3, 9, and 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution of the United States, and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 1119.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution, ''[t]o regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes . . .''

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 1120.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I; Section 8; Clause 1 of the Constitution states The Congress shall have Power 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 . . .

By Mr. WALDEN:

H.R. 1121.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1122.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to the Congress under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. ADAMS:

H.R. 1123.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution.

By Mr. BABIN:

H.R. 1124.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 9, clause 7, which states that, ''No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by the law.'

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1125.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4 grants the Congress power to establish an uniform rule of naturalization.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 1126.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. BASS:

H.R. 1127.

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 1.

Article. I.

Section 1.

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 1128.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 1129.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: 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; but all Duties, Imposts, and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the forgoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mrs. BLACK:

H.R. 1130.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

United States Constitution Article I Section 8

By Mr. BOST:

H.R. 1131.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1.

By Mr. BUCK:

H.R. 1132.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1, Section 8, of Article I of the United States Constitution, which states ''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; but all Duties and Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

By Mr. CARTER of Texas:

H.R. 1133.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution, which grants Congress the power to provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States.

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 1134.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. CLYBURN:

H.R. 1135.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COLE:

H.R. 1136.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, which permits Congress to regulate commerce. This legislation would modify the manner in which tobacco products are regulated.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 1137.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. COOK:

H.R. 1138.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. CRAMER:

H.R. 1139.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution (The Commerce Clause).

By Mr. DELANEY:

H.R. 1140.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 8, Section I of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1141.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 3 to the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee:

H.R. 1142.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 5.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 1143.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, Clause 3 and Clause 18.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 1144.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 7, Clause 1 and Section 8, Clause 1.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 1145.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 1146.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, Clause 3 and Clause 18.

By Ms. ESTY:

H.R. 1147.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 7 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 1148.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia:

H.R. 1149.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4, which states that Congress has the power ''to establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States.''

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, which states that Congress has the power to ''make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof . . .''

By Mr. HOLDING:

H.R. 1150.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 ''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, [. . .]''

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 1151.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 1152.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. HUIZENGA:

H.R. 1153.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. HUNTER:

H.R. 1154.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:

H.R. 1155.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8:

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; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article I, Section 9:

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 1156.

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. KEATING:

H.R. 1157.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1158.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 1159.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 1160.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. KINZINGER:

H.R. 1161.

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 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), and Artcile IV, section 3, clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respoecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Mr. KNIGHT:

H.R. 1162.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire:

H.R. 1163.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 1164.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. I, Sec. 8

''To regulate commerce w/foreign nations . . .''

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H.R. 1165.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. LONG:

H.R. 1166.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. LOVE:

H.R. 1167.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Constitutional authority in which this bill rests is in the power of Congress To regulate Commerce as enumerated by Article 1, section 8 of the United States Constitution as applied to providing for the general Welfare of the United States through the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 1168.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 1169.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII

By Ms. McSALLY:

H.R. 1170.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power 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; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department of Officer thereof.

By Mr. MOULTON:

H.R. 1171.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. NEAL:

H.R. 1172.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to lay and collect duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8.

By Mrs. NOEM:

H.R. 1173.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1174.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 1175.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 which provides Congress the power 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.

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 1176.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. POLIQUIN:

H.R. 1177.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2: ''The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.''

By Mr. POSEY:

H.R. 1178.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4

By Mr. RICE of South Carolina:

H.R. 1179.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause I

By Mrs. ROBY:

H.R. 1180.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 1181.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. ROGERS of Alabama:

H.R. 1182.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress' authority under Article 1 Section 8 to ''provide for the common defense'' and ''raise and support armies . . . and to provide and maintain a navy . . . and to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.''

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 1183.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. RUSH:

H.R. 1184.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: ''The Congress shall have power to . . . provide for the . . . general welfare of the United States . . .'';

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''To regulate commerce . . . among the several states . . .''; and

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: ''To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers . . .''

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 1185.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

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. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 1186.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

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. SENSENBRENNER:
H.R. 1187.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. SENSENBRENNER:
H.R. 1188.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1
By Mr. SERRANO:
H.R. 1189.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution The Congress shall have the 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; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States [Page H8414]
By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:
H.R. 1190.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:
H.R. 1781.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 and the sixteenth amendment [Page H2211]
On January 5, 2011, the House of Representatives adopted an amendment to House Rule XII. Rule XII, clause 7(c) requires that, to be accepted for introduction by the House Clerk, all bills (H.R.) and joint resolutions (H.J.Res.) must provide a document stating ''as specifically as practicable the power or powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the bill or joint resolution.''
By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:
H.R. 1191.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 1, 3, 10, 12, and 14.
By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:
H.R. 1192.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Congress has the authority to protect unborn children under the Supreme Court's Commerce Clause precedents and under the Constitution's grants of power to Congress under the Equal Protection, Due Process, and Enforcement Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.
By Mr. TROTT:
H.R. 1193.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, section 8
By Ms. WILSON of Florida:
H.R. 1194.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution
By Mr. ZELDIN:
H.R. 1195.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 grants Congress the authority to regulate ''commerce amoung the several States.'' This bill adresses the interstate commerce issue of striped bass fishing regulations in the federally controlled waters located between New York and Rhode Island.
By Mr. ZELDIN:
H.R. 1196.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.
Mrs. DAVIS of California:
H.R. 1197
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mrs. DAVIS of California:
H.R. 1198.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8
By Mr. PASCRELL:
H.R. 1199.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section I
By Mr. HOYER:
H.J. Res. 76.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 10
By Mr. DUNN:
H.J. Res. 77.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.
By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:
H.J. Res. 78.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17, giving Congress exclusive jurisdiction over the District of Columbia. That clause was cited as the authority for the government's ability to accept the original Smithson donation and the creation of the Smithsonian Institution via the Act of August 10, 1846.
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, the Necessary and Proper clause, which provides the power to enact legislation necessary to effectuate one of the earlier enumerated powers, such as the authority granted in Clause 17 above.
By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:
H.J. Res. 79.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17, giving Congress exclusive jurisdiction over the District of Columbia. That clause was cited as the authority for the government's ability to accept the original Smithson donation and the creation of the Smithsonian Institution via the Act of August 10, 1846.
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, the Necessary and Proper clause, which provides the power to enact legislation necessary to effectuate one of the earlier enumerated powers, such as the authority granted in Clause 17 above.
By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:
H.J. Res. 80.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17, giving Congress exclusive jurisdiction over the District of Columbia. That clause was cited as the authority for the government's ability to accept the original Smithson donation and the creation of the Smithsonian Institution via the Act of August 10, 1846.
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, the Necessary and Proper clause, which provides the power to enact legislation necessary to effectuate one of the earlier enumerated powers, such as the authority granted in Clause 17 above.
By Ms. MCCOLLUM:
H.J. Res. 81.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8
By Mr. WESTERMAN:
H.J. Res. 82.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 20: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 24: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. GOODLATTE, Ms. MCSALLY, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.
H.R. 36: Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 37: Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 38: Mr. BRADY of Texas.
H.R. 40: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia and Mr. RICHMOND.
H.R. 60: Mr. MULLIN, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. HILL, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 84: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 104: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 147: Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 161: Mr. MCNERNEY and Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 173: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 179: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mrs. LOVE, and Mrs. ROBY.
H.R. 198: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 246: Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.
H.R. 299: Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. HULTGREN, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. TURNER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. BLUM, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. GROTHMAN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 305: Mr. Raskin.
H.R. 356: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 367: Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. POE of Texas, and Mr. PERRY.
H.R. 371: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 377: Ms. CHENEY.
H.R. 380: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 402: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 422: Mr. PALMER.
H.R. 448: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 480: Mr. THORNBERRY.
H.R. 502: Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. BONAMICI, and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 548: Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 553: Mr. LAHOOD.
H.R. 556: Mr. LOBIONDO and Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 564: Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. TROTT, and Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 625: Mr. CORREA.
H.R. 630: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 631: Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. BUCK, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. HENSARLING, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 632: Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KNIGHT, and Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.
H.R. 637: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.
H.R. 639: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.
H.R. 641: Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. HUIZENGA.
H.R. 662: Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 669: Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H.R. 692: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mrs. ROBY.
H.R. 696: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 710: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 721: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi and Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 726: Mr. BIGGS and Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 727: Mr. BIGGS and Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 732: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 747: Mr. MACARTHUR.
H.R. 750: Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 753: Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 757: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 772: Mr. CARTER of Texas.
H.R. 778: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 781: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 800: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 804: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 807: Mr. WALBERG and Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 808: Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 816: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, and Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 820: Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. TURNER, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. BARTON, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 821: Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. KEATING, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 838: Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 839: Ms. KAPTUR and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 840: Ms. KAPTUR and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 848: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. HURD, Mr. BYRNE, and Mr. GRIFFITH.
H.R. 849: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 850: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 860: Mr. DESJARLAIS.
H.R. 866: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 878: Mr. POSEY, Mr. ABRAHAM, and Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 898: Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 909: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 914: Mr. VISCLOSKY and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 920: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. NADLER, Mr. COHEN, Ms. MENG, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 921: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. NADLER, Mr. COHEN, Ms. MENG, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 926: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 928: Mr. CULBERSON.
H.R. 930: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. HARPER, Mr. HECK, Mr. KIND, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. YOHO, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. EMMER, and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 947: Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 953: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. COMER, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. HULTGREN.
H.R. 959: Mr. WALZ and Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 960: Mr. THOMPSON of California and Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 967: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 975: Mr. COFFMAN and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 986: Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.
H.R. 1004: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1005: Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mrs. LOVE.
H.R. 1006: Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. CICILLINE, and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 1009: Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 1017: Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, and Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 1022: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 1026: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 1038: Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 1049: Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 1057: Mr. TURNER, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 1065: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 1067: Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 1083: Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 1094: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CONYERS, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 1098: Ms. NORTON and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.J. Res. 59: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. COLE, Mr. KING of Iowa, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.J. Res. 68: Mr. PEARCE.
H.J. Res. 72: Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. PALMER, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. MEADOWS, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. JONES.
H.J. Res. 74: Mr. HASTINGS and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H. Con. Res. 10: Mrs. NOEM and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H. Con. Res. 16: Mrs. LAWRENCE.
H. Con. Res. 22: Mrs. LAWRENCE.
H. Con. Res. 26: Mr. BABIN and Mr. BRIDENSTINE.
H. Res. 15: Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. WITTMAN, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mr. O'HALLERAN.
H. Res. 28: Mr. LEVIN and Mr. HUFFMAN.
H. Res. 30: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, and Mrs. LAWRENCE.
H. Res. 31: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H. Res. 111: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. WALZ, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. MENG, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. MOORE, Mr. GALLEGO, and Mr. TONKO.
H. Res. 113: Mr. KING of Iowa.
H. Res. 118: Ms. BONAMICI and Ms. NORTON.
H. Res. 124: Mr. KENNEDY.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MIKE ROUNDS, a Senator from the State of South Dakota.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, to whom we must give an account for all our powers and privileges, guide our steps, use us to bring healing to our Nation and world.

Give wisdom to our Senators, making them faithful stewards of Your will. As they strive to serve You, help them to remember that to whom much is given, much will be required. Open their minds and hearts to know and do Your will, relying on Your strength to empower them to serve You with honor. May they discover in their daily world the joy of partnership with You.

Lord, use them to keep America a shining city on a hill. As they delight in Your presence, plant within their hearts a greater desire to glorify You.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE ROUNDS, a Senator from the State of South Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ROUNDS thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF SCOTT PRUITT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in just a few minutes we will have an opportunity to confirm the nominee for the Office of Management and Budget. I had several things to say about him yesterday. Now I want to talk about the nominee we can advance after that confirmation vote.

Let me start by saying this. We all want clean water. We all want clean air. Promoting these goals is supposed to be the mission of the Environmental Protection Agency, but under the Obama administration, the agency's leadership prioritized partisan politics instead. It pursued policies that often put political benefits ahead of environmental ones. It ignored laws. It acted beyond its authority. It even treated middle-class coal families as enemies and then attacked them without a real sense of compassion.

The nominee before us, Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt, thinks it is time for the EPA to get back to the business of clean air and clean water instead, and to do so with an appreciation for the complexity of our modern world, with awareness of the broader economy, with compassion toward those impacted, with respect for the rule of law and the rights of State and local governments.

Pruitt has earned the support of countless groups across the country, from State environmental protection officers to agricultural leaders. He has the bipartisan backing of dozens of his fellow attorneys general as well. They say he is someone who is ''committed to clean air and clean water,'' one who is apt to ''come to Congress for a solution, rather than inventing power'' for himself.

What a welcome change. What a welcome change from the previous administration.

This is from a predecessor of Pruitt's in the attorney general's office, Democrat Mike Turpen:

As a Democrat, I take seriously the threats to our environment. . . . I may not agree with all the President-elect's policies or nominees, but I do know that Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt is a good choice to head up the Environmental Protection Agency.

Scott Pruitt's background in constitutional law, combined with a nuanced understanding of how environmental regulations affect the economy, mean that he will be a thoughtful leader of the EPA, and one capable of striking the balance between protecting the environment and our economy.

Here is another Democratic attorney general:

I am a Member of the Democratic National Committee and was a strong supporter of Secretary Clinton's campaign for President. I believe in the core mission of the Environmental Protection Agency.

And the nominee before us is known to him as ''a staunch defender of sound science and good policy as appropriate tools to protect the environment of his State.''

As one Democratic Senator put it, Scott Pruitt simply has ''the right experience for the position.''

He is exceptionally qualified. He is dedicated to environmental protection, and, as someone with State government experience, he understands the real world consequences of EPA actions

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

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and knows that balance is the key to making policies that are sustainable over the long term. Pruitt is just the candidate we need at the helm of the EPA.

We should confirm him. Doing so will represent another positive change in Washington that can give hope to families in Kentucky and across the Nation who are still recovering from the last 8 years.

RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, here is something else that will give cheer to Kentucky families. I am pleased to report that today the President will sign a resolution identical to a proposal I introduced, a resolution that will undo a harmful regulation that could threaten nearly one-third of America's coal mining jobs. I am looking forward to attending that signing ceremony later today.

This resolution is just one of several that we hope to send to the President to begin providing the American people with relief, protecting jobs, and growing our economy. It reflects promises made and promises kept.

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, let me begin with a statement of the obvious. ObamaCare is a disaster, an absolute disaster. Just one in five Americans say their families are better off since it went into effect. More actually say they are worse off. And, really, is it any wonder?

Americans were promised that costs would go down, but in fact they skyrocketed. Americans were promised choice, but it shriveled. We have been warning that choices would continue their downward decline under the ObamaCare status quo, and that is just what we saw this very week. One large national insurer announced it was being forced from the marketplace altogether—meaning thousands, including many in Kentucky, will lose their current health plans, thanks to ObamaCare.

The CEO of another major insurer predicted more insurers would soon follow—meaning thousands could find themselves without a single choice of health coverage, thanks to ObamaCare. This partisan law has entered a ''death spiral,'' the CEO warned, and ''it is not going to get any better; it's getting worse.''

This should be a wake-up call to the do-nothing crowd on the left. ObamaCare isn't working. It isn't sustainable, and it is going to continue attacking the middle class until it is repealed and replaced.

We have already begun the process here in Congress. We are going to continue working hand in hand with the administration to get it done. In the meantime, there is much the administration can do to help bring calm out of the chaos from ObamaCare's broken promises. That is especially true of Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, who was finally confirmed after weeks of unprecedented obstruction from across the aisle.

We saw a great example yesterday of what he can do to help stabilize the insurance market and protect consumers. The commonsense reforms he issued can help put downward pressure on costs and help prevent the fraud and abuse that ultimately hurt everyone. I commend him for taking these important first steps. They will help provide relief for Americans as broader efforts are made to address the underlying concerns with ObamaCare.

The status quo on ObamaCare is simply unsustainable. Congress will continue working to repeal and replace it with commonsense, step-by-step reforms. As we do, I hope the administration will continue using its existing authority to protect Americans from the unnecessary harm of this broken law.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, Neil Gorsuch is one of the most impressive Supreme Court nominees we have ever seen. His resume is a mile long, his reputation is second to none, and his record is literally something to behold.

In nearly a decade on the circuit court, his work was so outstanding, the Supreme Court didn't need to check it very often. In fact, as we recently learned from his Judiciary Committee questionnaire, the High Court felt the need to review on the merits an opinion he offered only once in 10 years. In that one case, a broad cross section of the Justices on the Court voted to affirm his work, with Justices Ginsburg, Breyer, and Sotomayor joining Justices Thomas and Alito in affirming his opinion.

Let me put that in context. Out of 240 opinions Judge Gorsuch wrote for the Tenth Circuit or where he authored a concurrence or dissent—not to mention the 500 additional unpublished dispositions he has written—the Supreme Court reviewed only one—one of his cases on the merits, and it affirmed the one case.

As for the cases where Judge Gorsuch did not write the opinion but joined in the opinion of his colleagues, the Supreme Court reviewed five of those cases, and the Court affirmed four out of five. So even including opinions that Judge Gorsuch did not author but joined, his overall record in the Supreme Court is being affirmed in five out of six cases.

How does that record compare to some of his would-be colleagues on the Supreme Court?

Well, President Obama's first nominee, Sonia Sotomayor also was a circuit court judge before she was appointed to the Supreme Court, and she was a circuit court judge for about the same amount of time as Judge Gorsuch has been, approximately a decade.

The Supreme Court reviewed on the merits five opinions she authored as a circuit court judge. But the Court reversed her most of the time—reversing her three out of five times. And in one of those two cases that it affirmed, the Supreme Court unanimously rejected her reasoning in doing so, finding that it ''flies in the face of the statutory language.''

So the Supreme Court actually rejected the approach of then Judge Sotomayor in four out of five opinions she authored.

Our Democratic colleagues are insistent that we have someone mainstream appointed to the Court, with the definition of mainstream, of course, being determined by their particular worldview. Since all of our Democratic colleagues who were here when her nomination to the Supreme Court was pending supported Justice Sotomayor, I know that they found her to be mainstream. Given that Judge Gorsuch's record before the Court he seeks to join is quite a bit better than hers, I assume they would concede, even if grudgingly, that as measured by one's record before the Supreme Court as a lower court judge, Judge Gorsuch is at least as ''mainstream'' as she is.

With Judge Gorsuch's impressive record before the Supreme Court and other impressive qualities, it is no wonder, then, that both sides of the political spectrum can't help but praise him. I have shared some of that praise already from those who have worked alongside him, from those who have studied underneath him, and now some thoughts from those who appeared before him.

Let me read to my colleagues from an article that appeared just a few days ago in the Albuquerque Journal:

> Local attorneys from across the political spectrum who have appeared before U.S. Supreme Court nominee Judge Neil Gorsuch call him a ''gentleman,'' ''extraordinarily affable,'' and ''an exceptional nomination.'' As a Federal Court of Appeals judge posted in Denver for the last 10 years, Gorsuch has ruled on numerous cases from New Mexico, giving many local attorneys an up-close view of the man who could fill the seat of the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

Here is one local lawyer who praised his fairness:

> He is an enormous intellect, a really, really bright guy. . . . He'll be one of the brightest justices on that court—if not the brightest. It was always a pleasure to be in front of him because whether you won or lost, you knew you were going to be treated fairly.

Here is another lawyer, a Democrat who appeared before him a dozen or so times, mostly on civil rights cases:

> Gorsuch is not an ''ideologue.'' Politics aside, Judge Gorsuch would be someone good for the judiciary and the country. People should rest assured that he would always try to make the most learned and just decision and politics would not be a consideration or factor in his decisions. . . . And that's from me, and I'm a longtime Democrat.

Here is one more who noted the legacy he has already left behind:

> Gorsuch has placed 11 of his (Appeals Court) clerks with Supreme Court justices,

so he is in the very top. And not only has he placed them, his law clerks go all over the place. They've clerked for Kennedy, Scalia, Thomas, and they've also clerked for Kagan and Sotomayor. . . . This is a really good indicator of what the justices think of this guy before he was even a nominee to the Supreme Court. It's like a Good Housekeeping seal of approval. And it cuts across the political spectrum.

In other words, clerks of Judge Gorsuch have gone on to clerk for Supreme Court Justices across the ideological spectrum.

Speaking of those who have clerked for Sonia Sotomayor, we recently heard a testimonial from an Obama administration lawyer who clerked for both Sotomayor and Gorsuch. ''I don't think folks on the Left should be concerned about Judge Gorsuch becoming a Supreme Court Justice,'' she said. ''He is extraordinarily fair-minded . . . [h]e will approach each case the same, regardless of the issue or the parties before him, and he will have a great deal of respect for folks on all sides of the ideological spectrum.''

That is very high praise. It is coming from both sides of the aisle. And I am sure we will hear even more of it as the days go by.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

INVESTIGATION INTO TIES BETWEEN THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AND THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we are in a moment of profound unease about the stability of the executive branch of our government.

The recent reports about General Flynn detailing constant, high-level contact between members of the Trump administration and the Russian Government raise serious doubts about this administration's competence in the realm of foreign policy and national security and even graver doubts about the sanctity of our democratic process.

We do not know all the facts, and in the coming days and weeks, more information may well surface about these disturbing revelations, but we already know that something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

I have been in Congress a long time, and I have never, ever seen anything like this. The institutions of government are being tested in a way they have not been tested in some time.

At this juncture, we would all do well to remember that democracy—the most benevolent, desirable, effective, and just form of government devised by man—is also one of the most fragile systems of government devised by man. It requires constant vigilance and strong democratic institutions to bolster one another.

At the time of the drafting of the Constitution, Thomas Jefferson expressed doubt that a government founded on such a document could long endure. Varying factions in our founding generation worried alternatively about the threats posed by mob rule and potential autocrats.

One of the things that the Framers of the Constitution most worried about was the threat of foreign intervention in our government, what they called foreign intrigue. Federalist No. 68, likely authored by a famous resident of my State, Alexander Hamilton, labeled the ''desire in foreign powers to gain an improper ascendant in our councils'' as one of the ''most deadly adversaries of republican government.'' That fear is the origin of the emoluments clause, which safeguards against bribery of government officials by foreign powers.

It cannot be that officers at the highest echelons of our governmentowe favors to foreign capitals. But it may well be that a high-level member of President Trump's campaign and administration, General Flynn, violated the emoluments clause by accepting money from the Russian Government during a trip to Moscow in 2015. The reported contact between operatives in the Trump campaign and Russian intelligence officials is exactly the kind of intrigue that our Founders sought to prohibit.

I mention all of this because I believe the stakes to be very high. This is not a drill. Nothing less than our system of checks and balances, the rule of law, and our national security is at stake.

Our Nation does not face moments like this often. Frankly, the fact that foreign powers would have high influence in our government has not been on the front page for decades. But the wisdom of the Founding Fathers shines through. It is a real danger, and now the possibility of that danger being real is here today.

History will look upon us and will no doubt judge our efforts to stem this wrong wherever it occurs. Our Nation does not face moments like this often.

From the earliest days of the Republic, what has always sustained us has been the strength of our democratic institutions of government. We have distinct pillars of power that check and balance one another for the very purpose of fortifying our government whenever one branch is deficient. On this matter, the legislative branch has a responsibility to be that check and balance via our oversight duties.

All of us can agree that right now what are required are the facts. We have to evaluate the scope of Russia's interference in our election and assess if agents of their government have penetrated to the highest levels of our government. Throughout the process, we have to avoid jumping to conclusions or engaging in wild speculation. We must seek the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Once we have all the facts at our disposal, Democrats and Republicans alike can debate what to do next.

The investigation should proceed along two tracks. The first is Congress. My friend from Virginia, Senator WARNER, the ranking member on the Senate Intelligence Committee, is committed to using every resource and authority in that committee to seek the truth. His committee will take the lead, but it will not be the only committee that looks into ties between the Trump campaign, transition, or administration, and Russia. The Judiciary, Foreign Relations, HSGAC, Banking, and Commerce Committees all have significant roles at getting to the bottom of this. They should also move forward in their areas of jurisdiction. These committee investigations must be bipartisan; they must have access to all intelligence officials, transcripts, documents, and other related materials that they need to answer critical questions; and they must be permitted to make their findings public to the maximum extent possible.

Of course, anything that Congress does requires Republican support because they are in the majority. I am gratified that some of our Republican colleagues have called for that. Bipartisan letters from the Judiciary Committee and the Intelligence Committee have been and are being sent last night and today. These letters will ask for document preservation, briefings, and for information related to the investigations.

As for the Intelligence Committee, Senator BURR, the chairman, originally expressed skepticism about his committee proceeding with an investigation into the ties between the Trump campaign and Russia, but he is now working well with Senator WARNER to do this. We will be watching very carefully. If the Intelligence Committee investigation is not proceeding to unearth the entire truth, we will seek alternative tools and structures to get to the truth because get to the truth we must.

The second part of the investigation is in the executive branch, where law enforcement resides. While Congress has a constitutional oversight ability to bring facts to light, it is only the executive branch that can prosecute potential criminal liability.

The two are not mutually exclusive. They are not either/or. They must move forward simultaneously on parallel tracks.

On the executive branch side, three specific things must now happen:

First, Attorney General Sessions must follow Department of Justice guidance and recuse himself.

When the FBI looks into a matter, they do so right alongside prosecutors from the Justice Department. Those prosecutors should not be reporting to the first Senator who endorsed Donald Trump's campaign, who served on the same campaign committee as General Flynn, and who nominated Donald Trump at the Republican convention. The Justice Department's own guidelines demand that Attorney General

Sessions remove himself from this matter immediately. If he does not, he will be breaking serious guidelines that have been in place for decades, followed by both Republican and Democratic administrations alike. To disregard or ignore these rules would be a major transgression by this administration, so early in its term, and would bode poorly for the future impartiality of the criminal justice system.

We now know that the President and the Attorney General are meeting today. Of course the President needs to meet with the Attorney General; that is important for national security. But until the Attorney General recuses himself, those meetings raise serious questions. There will be a cloud hanging over every meeting and conversation between the President and the Attorney General until the Attorney General recuses himself. We presume that they would not even think of discussing the investigation—that the Attorney General and the President would not—because if they were to discuss any investigation, it would constitute a massive, massive ethical violation.

Second, to reiterate, from the executive branch point of view, we expect the administration will order all records from administration, transition, and campaign officials to be preserved.

There is real concern that some in the administration may try to cover up its ties to Russia by deleting emails, texts, or other records that could shine a light on these connections. These records are likely to be the subject of executive branch as well as congressional investigations and must be preserved.

Third, campaign, transition, and administration officials must be made available to testify in public, under oath, on these issues.

It has been reported that campaign officials have had constant contact with Russian intelligence officials. They must testify.

Our caucus is united in these three requests, and we hope and expect our Republican colleagues to join in these appeals as well.

Senate Democrats are faithfully committed to keeping this issue above partisan politics. The gravity of this issue demands nothing less.

Throughout the history of this country, the Senate has come together to steer the ship of state through stormy seas when the times required it. Republican Senators like Howard Baker, Hugh Scott, and Bob Dole rose above politics during the Watergate, Iran-Contra, and Whitewater scandals to demand the truth. I am very hopeful my Republican colleagues on the other side will follow in that grand tradition. I am very hopeful the other side wants to get at all the facts, just as our side wants to get at all the facts.

I disagree with my friends on the other side of the aisle often on a number of issues—often, we disagree vociferously—but I have never once doubted their patriotism. This is an issue on which patriotism must prevail over politics because before we are Democrats or Republicans, we are Americans, with respect for the rule of law.

I have a hope and a faith that these reports and revelations will not pit the two parties against one another—that they will unite the parties in pursuit of the full truth.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of MICK MULVANEY, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes of debate equally divided.

The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this may be one of the most important votes in this new session of the Senate relative to the Trump administration. It is a Cabinet position most people are not aware of, except if you work here. It is the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

This individual has the authority to write the President's budget, to establish priorities, and to review Federal spending governmentwide. It is a big job. It is an awesome responsibility. The way it is executed will not only lead to an accounting of our Federal expenditures, but it will have a direct impact on America's economy.

The choice of Congressman MICK MULVANEY of South Carolina for this job is wrong. It is wrong based on his record in the House of Representatives. He was a founding member of the Freedom Caucus in the House of Representatives. That is a group which led to the resignation of Speaker Boehner and continues to tie the House of Representatives into knots. Why? Because they have certain tactics they believe are credible tactics, which Congressman MULVANEY signed up for. Let me give one of them.

They think closing down the government is a good way to get people's attention. Well, they are right. It sure gets attention. But it does it at the expense of innocent people across America—taxpayers, those who are receiving critical programs, and Federal employees who are waiting for their paychecks. Congressman MULVANEY signed up for that.

Once every year or so we have to decide to lift what is called the debt ceiling, which is the indebtedness of the United States, the full faith and credit of our government—really, the credibility of our government when it comes to financing. Congressman MULVANEY, who wants to head the Office of Management and Budget, has said we can default on our national debt, and it really won't cause that great of a problem. That is just the beginning of some of his bizarre views.

He said he wants to end the Medicare program as we know it. He calls Social Security a Ponzi scheme. He has called for a 25-percent reduction in reimbursement for Medicaid; that is health insurance for children, the disabled, and the elderly in America. He also has questioned whether the United States as a government should continue to invest in medical research.

I am not making this up. This man who wants to set the priorities for the Trump administration and deliver the budget for America's future questions whether our Federal Government should invest in medical research.

When it came to paying for natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy—and it happens to every State—he decided that instead of coming to the rescue of people in an emergency, we would have to cut entitlement programs—Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—as well as military spending, in order to pay for disasters. That is how shortsighted he has been, and President Trump has chosen him to write the budget for America.

I just have to say that his priorities as a founding member of the Freedom Caucus disqualify him for this job, in my consideration. The fact that he would repeal the Affordable Care Act without a replacement and leave some 30 million insured Americans without the promise of healthcare security for their families is another indication of an extreme point of view which should not be defining our government in Washington.

I have no doubt Republicans are going to march in lockstep, with maybe one exception. Senator MCCAIN has said he is going to vote against him. I think they will end up giving President Trump his man as head of the Office of Management and Budget. But we are in for a battle royal over the values in America. You can judge that values of a nation not by political speeches but by our budget.

Congressman MULVANEY will cut some of the most basic and fundamental programs of our government, would endanger our economy by questioning the full faith and credit of the

United States, and is prepared to shut down the government to get his way. That is not a responsible course when it comes to budgetmaking in a great nation like America.

I will be opposing the nomination of MICK MULVANEY to be head of the Office of Management and Budget.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, when I woke up this morning I was remembering some of the Old West stories about catching the culprit and hanging him. Then we got a little more sophisticated out West, and we said: You know, we need to give that person a fair trial and then hang him.

Sometimes I feel like these Cabinet position hearings are exactly that. They let the person ask questions. They ask very leading questions. I am not sure anybody listens to the answers. Then they have to answer a whole bunch of questions. I am not sure anybody reads the answers to those questions, and if they do, any time you read something, there can be a certain bias that is built into it. I am sorry that is happening to Cabinet after Cabinet after Cabinet position.

Traditionally, a President has gotten the Cabinet that he wanted, often in the first week that he was in. Some of them got it on the first day they were in.

This is a key position for the President. But we have to remember that he doesn't get to make any final decisions. He gets to recommend to the President and make a presentation to the President on what there ought to be, and then the President presents a budget.

Looking back over the last 8 years, we have voted on the President's budget. For 7 years, the President got zero votes. That means his budget did not go into place. In the eighth year, he got one vote. I am hoping that Representative MULVANEY can do a considerably better job than that in outlining what our needs are, presenting it to the President, and getting some agreement so that we can get this country on a plan to where we can quit increasing the $20 trillion debt burden which faces us because of the 8 years of anemic economic and policy growth we have had.

With unprecedented attempts to delay the new Cabinet, Senate Democrats have ensured the President has been without an OMB Director longer than any other President in the past 40 years. The reason I use 40 years is that is as long as that position has been in place.

According to Senate records, from President Jimmy Carter to President Obama, the longest it ever took to approve a first budget director for new Presidents was 1 week—1 week. We are now in week 4 and with little movement. As Majority Leader MCCONNELL said last week, this is the slowest time for a new Cabinet to be up and running since President George Washington—and that was last week that he said that.

It is vital we fill this position. I am hopeful Mr. MULVANEY and the OMB will ensure that the taxes of hard-working Americans sent to Washington are spent in the most effective and efficient way. The Federal Government has not been currently focused on making sure hard-working taxpayers get the best deal for their money. A new OMB Director focused on responsible budgeting can help ensure the duplication of government programs and agencies is discovered and it is addressed. This will help the Federal Government to be more accountable and more effective.

I remember walking over to the inauguration next to the new Senator from Maryland, who talked to me about MULVANEY and said that he was kind of impressed that the two of them had agreed on some budgetary principles. That was a bit of a shock to me.

The Government Accountability Office every year outlines tens of billions of dollars in savings that can be achieved through various efficiency measures. OMB can play an important role in ensuring that spending programs don't duplicate each other. That is what MULVANEY is excited about. Additionally, reforming and consolidating these programs can ensure they focus on real needs and be managed with an eye toward real results.

Several years ago, Congress passed a law requiring the administration to list all Federal programs on a central governmentwide website, along with related budget and performance information, maybe saying how many people work there and how many customers they serve. Unfortunately, when the program lists were put online, GAO reviewed the information and discovered that the inventory, in their own words, was ''not a useful tool for decisionmaking.'' That has to change. MULVANEY can change that. Even if the government can't answer that question, we can find strong evidence that the numbers are on the rise, and Mr. MULVANEY will be able to play a crucial role in taming the unchecked growth of the Federal Government.

To conclude, I have full faith in Representative MULVANEY. That is why I am asking you today to take my word for his capability. I do take my word very seriously. Please support Representative MULVANEY for this important position and get this position onboard so we can do the work that we are supposed to do—one of which is to get a budget from the President by today. That is not going to be possible because he doesn't have anybody to do the budget yet. Then, we can get on with the business of this country. We have been working on some bipartisan budget processes that we can do. We will get that done, too, with his help, with the President's help, and with help from both sides of the aisle. We badly need it.

I ask for support for Representative MULVANEY.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I oppose the nomination of Representative MICK MULVANEY to serve as Director of the Office of Management & Budget, OMB. Representative MULVANEY's radical views regarding the fundamental role of government in our society make him philosophically ill-suited to run OMB. I will list a number of those views.

Social Security—In May 2009, Representative MULVANEY was a member of the South Carolina State Senate and voted to declare that Social Security is unconstitutional. He also wants to raise the retirement age to 70. Raising the retirement age to 70 would cut earned benefits by nearly 20 percent for all beneficiaries. With all the challenges people have saving for retirement, the last thing we should do is raise the Social Security retirement age.

Medicare—Representative MULVANEY is on record advocating enormous cuts to Medicare and is a proponent of Speaker RYAN's preferred ''premium support,'' i.e., voucher, concept for Medicare. ''Premium support'' is a euphemism for privatizing Medicare. Representative MULVANEY said on Fox News, in April, 2011. ''We have to end Medicare as we know it.'' And he indicated that he wants to raise the eligibility age to 67.

Medicare guarantees comprehensive health insurance coverage for almost 50 million Americans. Only 2 percent of elderly Americans are uninsured; nearly 50 percent were before Medicare was signed into law.

Debt ceiling—Representative MULVANEY appears willing to jeopardize the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. He claims that breeching the debt ceiling would not automatically trigger a default on Treasury debt; he calls such concern ''a fabricated crisis.'' Representative MULVANEY believes the Treasury would be able to ''prioritize'' payments and avoid a default.

His ''pay China first'' policy is contrary to the opinion of several recent Treasury Secretaries, would be impossible to execute from a logistical standpoint, and is based on a 1985 Government Accountability Office report the agency has since walked away from. The Treasury Department lacks legal authority to establish ''priorities'' with respect to paying the Nation's obligations. Each law obligating funds and authorizing expenditures stands on an equal footing, so the Department has to make payments on obligations as they come due.

Debt limit brinksmanship is expensive. According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, the 10-year cost to taxpayers of the 2011 debt limit standoff was $18.9 billion because of the increased interest rates on U.S. securities issued in 2011. On August 5, 2011, Standard & Poor's downgraded the long-term credit rating of the U.S. government for the first time in history, from AAA to AA+.

Government shutdowns—Representative MULVANEY believes that shutting

down the Federal Government is an acceptable way to do business. He stated on CNN that shutting down the government over funding the Affordable Care Act was ''worth it'' in October 2013 and embraces the term ''shutdown caucus.'' In a September 2015 Atlantic article, he argued that shutting down the government is important becauset it is what ''the base of the (Republican) party wants.''

Standard & Poor's determined that the October 2013 government shutdown cost $24 billion.

Federal workers—Representative MULVANEY has sponsored numerous bills attacking the Federal workforce, including many that freeze Federal workers' pay. Federal workers have already ''contributed'' over $180 billion to deficit reduction through pay freezes and other measures. He has sponsored the Federal Workforce Reduction Through Attrition Act, the most recent version of which caps the Federal workforce at 90 percent of its current level. A previous version would have mandated that ''agencies do not appoint'' for 3 years ''more than one employee for every three employees retiring or otherwise separating from government service.''

Women's reproductive health—in September 2015, Representative MULVANEY spearheaded a letter signed by 38 House Republicans—all men—opposing any legislation to fund the government that also continues to fund Planned Parenthood. In an August 2015 email to the Washington Post, Representative MULVANEY wrote that, if the Congress were to shut down the Federal Government over Planned Parenthood funding, ''so be it.''

Science and climate change—in a Facebook post from last September, quoted in Vox, Representative MULVANEY questioned the need for government funded research ''at all'' in the context of doubting the scientific consensus that the Zika virus causes microcephaly.

Representative MULVANEY disputes the overwhelming scientific consensus on climate change. During the Budget Committee's nomination hearing, when Senator KAINE asked Representative MULVANEY about human-caused climate change, Representative MULVANEY replied, ''I challenge the premise of your fact.''

The Union of Concerned Scientists opposes Representative MULVANEY's nomination, writing:

> He has backed legislation to change the regulatory process in ways that would give an even stronger influence to industry, increase political interference and undermine science-based decision-making . . . Too often, the voices of people who will be hurt the most by rolling back science-based safeguards are drowned out by industries. The next OMB director needs to enact science-based laws in a timely manner, with a focus on ensuring benefits for all Americans.

Not surprisingly, Koch Industries has been a primary donor to Representative MULVANEY's campaigns and his PAC.

Regulations—Representative MULVANEY's voting record has been hostile to regulatory efforts to improve health, safety, and consumer protections. This is especially alarming because as OMB Director, Representative MULVANEY will oversee the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Representative MULVANEY has voted to curtail regulations regarding debit cards, medical devices, public swimming pools, excessive executive compensation, consumer financial protection, energy exploration, investment advisers, mortgage lenders, and so on.

House Republican budget plans—the last time House Republicans brought a full budget resolution to the House floor, Representative MULVANEY voted against it because it wasn't extreme enough. He supported the Republican Study Committee, RSC, budget instead. Provisions of the most recent version of the RSC budget include: No. 1, a 10-year $261 billion cut to Social Security by cutting cost-of-living adjustments, COLAs, increasing the retirement age to 70, and ''increasing means-testing''; No. 2, $662 billion in cuts to Medicare by changing the program into a ''premium support'' model, i.e., ''voucher-izing,'' increasing the eligibility age, and phasing in means-testing; No. 3, $1.6 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, which would be combined into one block grant program; No. 4, $925 billion in savings by repealing the Affordable Care Act exchanges; and No. 5, $2.2 trillion in cuts to undefined ''other mandatory'' spending. Notably, the budget would not raise one dime in new revenue from the Nation's wealthiest individuals and largest corporations.

''Nannygate''—Representative MULVANEY failed to pay FICA and Federal and State unemployment taxes on a household employee for the years 2000 to 2004. Representative MULVANEY admitted that the nanny in question worked full time—40 hours a week—for 4 to 5 years.

Representative MULVANEY said that he didn't believe he owed payroll and unemployment insurance taxes on his nanny because ''she simply helped [my wife] with the children. We considered her a babysitter.'' This is despite the fact that, as the owner of several small businesses, he knew to pay these taxes for his other full-time employees.

As a State Senator in South Carolina, Representative MULVANEY sponsored the following three bills: No. 1, to prohibit candidates from the ballot for the State legislature if they had not paid all Federal and State income taxes over the past 10 years; No. 2, to prohibit candidates from the ballot for State office if they had not paid all Federal and State income taxes over the past 10 years; and No. 3, to prohibit the governor from appointing anyone who had not paid all Federal and State income taxes over the past 10 years.

Representative MULVANEY voted for H.R. 1563, Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act of 2015, which authorizes ''the head of an agency to take personnel actions against an agency employee who willfully failed to file a required tax return or willfully understated federal tax liability.'' It is worth noting here that Federal workers have a lower percentage of tax noncompliance than the general public—a 3.1 percent delinquency rate versus 8.7 percent. And Representative MULVANEY sponsored the Spending Reduction Act of 2011, which would have made people with ''seriously delinquent tax debts'' ineligible for Federal employment.

Representative MULVANEY is the wrong choice to run the OMB,

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I know MICK MULVANEY. We served together for 6 years in the House of Representatives. I have always found him to be a straight shooter. And he was a champion of budget transparency. I also respect him for taking on some budget fights even when they were not popular with his Republican leadership. We worked together to ensure honest budgeting when we joined in efforts to prevent the use of overseas contingency operations funding as a slush fund for unlimited Pentagon spending.

I have deep concerns, however, about many of the positions that Mr. MULVANEY has taken over the years on matters vital to the Nation.

He has proposed radical measures that would undermine our fundamental safety net. He has said, ''We have to end Medicare as we know it.'' And he criticized Congressman PAUL RYAN's already harsh budget because it did not cut important programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid fast enough.

Mr. MULVANEY has taken too cavalier an attitude toward the threat of default on U.S. Government obligations. He called the need to raise the debt ceiling a ''fabricated crisis.'' And he has repeatedly introduced legislation to prioritize payment of obligations to bondholders—who are often foreign—over other government obligations, including those to our veterans—in effect paying China first. At his confirmation hearing, he did not indicate that he has changed his view. The failure of the U.S. Government to pay its debts would wreak havoc on the economy.

Similarly, Mr. MULVANEY has been far too flippant about budgetary confrontations. He was a leader of a group threatening to shut down the government in order to defund Planned Parenthood, saying, ''If we can do that while still funding the rest of the government, fine. If we cannot, and there is a lapse in appropriations, so be it.'' And when asked if the 2013 government shutdown fight over Obamacare was worth it, he said it was.

Mr. MULVANEY has shown too great a willingness to eliminate government functions that protect consumers or help create jobs. Speaking of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, he said, ''I don't like the fact that CFPB exists.'' And he referred to legislation

reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank as ''a piece of crap.'' Those were his words.

At his hearing, he did not appear to have a grasp of the size of the Federal workforce, and that it is smaller than any time during the Reagan administration. He did not seem to realize that the share of the population employed in the Federal Government is at the lowest point on record, since reliable data first became available shortly before World War II. These are fundamental facts the OMB Director should know.

Because of these concerns, I will be unable to support Mr. MULVANEY's nomination.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget is a key player in setting the Nation's economic policy. The Director of OMB produces the President's budget, enforces funding laws that Congress enacts, and oversees the regulations that protect Americans' health, safety, and environment through the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

If the Senate confirms Mr. MULVANEY, I will watch with great interest how he reconciles his past positions with his new responsibilities representing the administration and the American people. I hope that he will respect the hard-working Federal employees who serve our Nation. In his new position, I do believe that his personal relationships with Members of Congress will prove useful, and I will look for areas where we can work together.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I yield back the time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Mulvaney nomination?

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second?

The clerk will call the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 68 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—49

Baldwin	Brown	Casey
Bennet	Cantwell	Coons
Blumenthal	Cardin	Cortez Masto
Booker	Carper	Donnelly
Duckworth	Leahy	Schatz
Durbin	Manchin	Schumer
Feinstein	Markey	Shaheen
Franken	McCain	Stabenow
Gillibrand	McCaskill	Tester
Harris	Menendez	Udall
Hassan	Merkley	Van Hollen
Heinrich	Murphy	Warner
Heitkamp	Murray	Warren
Hirono	Nelson	Whitehouse
Kaine	Peters	Wyden
King	Reed	
Klobuchar	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote on the nomination, I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The motion was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Pruitt nomination.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President and colleagues, if I could have your attention, please. Five minutes please. Two years ago, the Center for Media and Democracy filed a petition under Oklahoma FOIA law called the Oklahoma Open Records Act. For 2 years, the appeal of that petition was blocked. Earlier this year, a lawsuit was brought to require the release of thousands of emails from the AG's office in Oklahoma with the fossil fuel industry, oil companies, coal companies, and the like. Six hours from right now, an expedited hearing will take place in the district court of Oklahoma.

Earlier this week, nine members of the Environment and Public Works Committee wrote and asked the judge who is going to preside over that hearing today to move forward expeditiously, and she is. We also wrote and asked the majority leader to delay the vote on cloture for Scott Pruitt until a week from Monday. He has declined.

Thomas Jefferson used to say: If the people know the truth, they will not make a mistake. Colleagues, we need to know the truth. Speaking of the truth, there is an old saying that says: People may not believe what we say. They will believe what we do.

As a candidate, as nominee, and President-elect, Donald Trump has made clear his job, his goal is to degrade and to destroy the Environmental Protection Agency. Like a lot of things he says, we asked: Did he mean it? With the nomination of Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA, it is clear he did.

In Mr. Pruitt, Trump has found someone who, as AG of the State of Oklahoma, shut down your environmental protection unit in that office. He went on to raise millions of dollars for fossil fuel industries and other sources used to sue the Environmental Protection Agency because of their efforts to reduce methane emissions, their efforts to stop cross-border pollution, their efforts to cut methane emissions, their efforts to fight smog, haze, and ozone. Under Attorney General Pruitt's stewardship in Oklahoma, child asthma is well above the national average. Fish advisories in lakes in Oklahoma have more than doubled. All 16 counties in Oklahoma that are evaluated by the American Lung Association for clean air received an F last year—every one of them. Earthquakes have risen over the last dozen years in Oklahoma, from one or two per year to one or two per day. That is only the earthquakes that exceed 3.0 on the Richter scale.

When we asked Scott Pruitt today to name one battle he had led to reduce pollution in his State, he cited the issue involving the Illinois River, which we later learned was actually much more the work of his predecessor than it was his. When I asked him to name one environmental rule and regulation that he supported, he declined to do so. We are coming off of yet another hottest year on record. They are experiencing monsoon-like rains in California this month after years of drought. Temperatures in Alaska are so warm, we are not sure some years that they are going to actually have the Iditarod dog race, sea levels are rising from New England to Miami, there is a huge crack in the ice in Antarctica, and Scott Pruitt raises questions about the validity of the science around climate change. In last year's election, a lot of people said: We want to take our country back. To what? The Cuyahoga River which caught on fire; the L.A. smog that was so bad, when I ran it hurt my lungs.

Some say: Is it possible to have clean air and clean water with a strong environment? That is nonsense. We can have both. Since Richard Nixon signed into law creating the EPA, guess what. GDP in this country has grown by 200 percent or more. Since losing 5 million jobs in the great recession, we added 16 million jobs, the unemployment rate is down by half.

We still have work to do, my friends. There are communities in the United States where water is unsafe to drink. There are millions of kids and grandkids who have asthma. We have fish advisories that abound from sea to shining sea. The sea level is rising up and down the east coast. State Route 1 in my State, our major highway, was shut down again last week, not because of a huge storm but just because of sea level rise.

Let me close by saying that when our grandchildren ask us years from now what we did about it, I want to tell them we did the right thing. We did not back down. We stood our ground. We voted to face this challenge to our people and to the planet, and to overcome those challenges.

Please, join us in voting no on the motion to invoke cloture.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Scott Pruitt, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Mike Rounds, Tim Scott, Johnny Isakson, Lindsey Graham, James M. Inhofe, David Perdue, Shelley Moore Capito, Roger F. Wicker, Orrin G. Hatch, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, James Lankford, John Hoeven, John Thune, Deb Fischer.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Scott Pruitt, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 69 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cassidy	Heller	Rounds
Cochran	Hoeven	Rubio
Collins	Inhofe	Sasse
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Strange
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Enzi	McCain	Toomey
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Reed
Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Stabenow
Carper	Klobuchar	Tester
Casey	Leahy	Udall
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	McCaskill	Warner
Donnelly	Menendez	Warren
Duckworth	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	
Franken	Nelson	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Scott Pruitt, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the nomination of Attorney General Scott Pruitt to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Scott Pruitt is the right person to run the Agency, and we need to confirm him.

Over the past 8 years, the political leaders of the EPA have taken actions that have undermined the American people's faith in the Agency. They have pushed broad and sweeping regulations that have hurt our economy and have failed to protect our environment. These regulations include the so-called Clean Power Plan. This is a rule that will kill job growth in States like Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, and my home State of Wyoming. These also include regulations defining the term ''waters of the United States.'' This was a classic example of Washington overreach. The Agency brought irrigation ditches, plowed farm fields, and even parking lot puddles under Federal control. With both of these rules, dozens of State governments have had to take Washington to court. Why? Well, to try to stop the crippling effects of these Washington-based regulations.

The Agency's outrageous actions have extended beyond these rules and have had real consequences for many American families. According to the chamber of commerce, since 2008 this regulatory rampage by the EPA has destroyed 19,000 coal-mining jobs nationwide. In Kentucky, nearly 4 out of every 10 coal-mining jobs have disappeared over the past 8 years. Ohio and Pennsylvania have each lost more than 1,000 fossil fuel electric power jobs during the same period. In West Virginia, 5,200 coal-mining jobs have vanished just since 2011.

The total cost of all of this new red-tape from the Environmental Protection Agency is more than $300 billion. The leadership at the EPA has failed. It has failed because a lot of their regulations are bad ideas.

That is not the only way the political leaders at the Agency have failed; they have actually hurt people and damaged the environment directly. In 2015, more than 3 million gallons of toxic wastewater spilled into the river at the Gold King Mine in Colorado. The government Agency charged with protecting our environment actually caused this spill and poisoned a river. This was a direct result of negligence on the part of the Environmental Protection Agency. This plume of toxic liquid flowed downstream to New Mexico and polluted the Navajo Nation's main source of drinking water and irrigation water.

In the final days of the Obama administration, the EPA then denied $1.2 billion in damage claims from the farmers, the Native American tribes, and small businesses impacted by the EPA's own negligence.

In Flint, MI, old pipes and improperly treated water caused lead poisoning in children. When the leadership at the EPA learned of the issue, they failed to respond in a timely manner. The regional EPA administrator actually resigned following the incident.

For the last 8 years, the political leaders of this Agency have been reckless, irresponsible, and arrogant. Change is badly needed at the Environmental Protection Agency and Scott Pruitt will be that change. Mr. Pruitt has served as attorney general in the State of Oklahoma since 2011—6 years. He has worked to protect the environment in his State, while also working for the benefit of all the people of Oklahoma.

He has taken on polluters. He has worked across party lines to do it. When poultry farmers in Arkansas, a neighboring State to Oklahoma, were increasing phosphorous levels in the Illinois River that runs between the States, he worked with Arkansas' Democratic attorney general on a solution. They found a way to reduce pollution and establish permanent standards.

Former Arkansas Attorney General McDaniel, a Democrat, called Pruitt a ''staunch defender of sound science and good policy as appropriate tools to protect the environment in his State.''

Scott Pruitt also helped negotiate a water rights settlement between tribes in Oklahoma. The deal will help preserve scenic rivers and lakes so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Scott Pruitt also stood up to industry when they caused pollution. That is why the entire Oklahoma congressional delegation has endorsed his nomination. He has been an advocate for the environment in Oklahoma, and he will be an advocate for the environment in Washington.

When the EPA overstepped its mission, Attorney General Pruitt led the charge to rein in Big Government Washington overreach. Time after time, Scott Pruitt worked with other States to challenge the Agency when it exceeded its authority. Under his leadership, this Agency will respect the rule of law.

Attorneys general from 24 States have endorsed Scott Pruitt as someone who can protect the environment while also protecting State decisionmaking. He has also won the support of small businesses and farmers around the country. Groups like the National Federation of Independent Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Home Builders, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and many others have voiced their support for Mr. Pruitt.

As chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I take the nomination process very seriously. Our committee thoroughly vetted Mr. Pruitt. We held a confirmation hearing that lasted more than 6 hours. That is by far the longest confirmation hearing for an EPA Administrator on record.

During this hearing, Attorney General Pruitt was asked more than 200 questions by Members of the committee. We had four rounds of questions—an unprecedented number. Our Democratic colleagues on the committee noted during the hearing how fair the process was. They said how much they appreciated the opportunity to ask so many questions. After the hearing, committee members submitted another 1,078 written questions to Mr. Pruitt to answer for the record. Again, this is the most ever for a nominee to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. His answers were thoughtful, and they were thorough. That is why I was very disappointed to see the Democrats on the committee decide to boycott the meeting to vote on the Pruitt nomination.

The minority complained that he didn't answer enough questions. Democrats have even complained that he has not been vetted thoroughly enough. That is ridiculous. Scott Pruitt is the most thoroughly vetted nominee we have ever had to lead this Agency. Democrats are using delaying tactics to slow down the confirmation of many of this administration's most important nominees. These boycotts and delay tactics do nothing to protect our environment or the health of Americans. Democrats are engaged in nothing more than political theater. They are wasting time while the Environmental Protection Agency needs a new Administrator.

Attorney General Pruitt has protected the environment in his home State. He is endorsed by his peers, and he has been thoroughly vetted for the job. He will make an excellent EPA Administrator. It is time for the Senate to confirm him.

Mr. President, at this time I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the following items in support of Mr. Pruitt's nomination: First are two op-eds I authored, one is from FOX News that is entitled ''For Eight Years, the EPA Has Made Life Hard for Too Many Americans. That's About to Change.''

The second is from USA TODAY, entitled: ''The Strong Leader the EPA Needs.''

I also ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD some other items: a letter from Dustin McDaniel, Democrat and Arkansas former attorney general. In the letter, he writes that he ''saw firsthand how Attorney General Pruitt was able to bridge political divides and manage multiple agency agendas to reach an outcome that was heralded by most credible observers as positive and historic.''

Another item for the RECORD is a letter from 24 State attorneys general who wrote in support of Mr. Pruitt's qualifications.

Also for the RECORD is a letter I received from J.D. Strong. He is the director of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. In the letter, Mr. Strong directly refutes a New York Times article titled ''Scott Pruitt, Trump's EPA Pick, Backed Industry Donors over Regulators.''

Mr. Strong writes:

> As a fifth generation Oklahoman and someone who has devoted my career to natural resource protection, I take great pride in the progress that has been made in improving Oklahoma's land, air, water, and wildlife resources.

He goes on to say—

> For the past six years, General Pruitt has been instrumental in many of our successes and never asked me to compromise regulatory efforts to benefit industry.

Also, I would like to include in the RECORD an op-ed by Ed Fite, the former agency administrator of the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission. He writes:

> Scott Pruitt is one who is committed to finding a balance that protects and preserves our environment while at the same time affords an opportunity for a robust economy to exist. Achievement of one doesn't have to be exclusive of the other.

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

[FoxNews.com, Jan. 17, 2017]

SEN. BARRASSO: FOR 8 YEARS THE EPA HAS MADE LIFE HARD FOR TOO MANY AMERICANS. THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE

(By Sen. John Barrasso, M.D.)

Seventy-five thousand dollars per day. That's how much the Environmental Protection Agency threatened to fine a private land owner in my home state of Wyoming. The crime: digging a pond in his back yard.

This was an appalling overreach by the Obama administration's EPA and its regulation of American's property.

Sadly, this story is not unique.

For the past eight years, the EPA has abused and attacked far too many hardworking American families.

A regulatory rampage by EPA has led to the loss of thousands of coal mining jobs in Wyoming, West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky.

Wisconsin is poised to lose more than 20,000 jobs in the next decade because of the Obama administration's proposed regulations on carbon emissions.

The misguided obsession of the EPA has created needless economic burdens for Americans. It has, at the same time, put people's health in danger.

Negligence on the part of the EPA resulted in more than 3 million gallons of toxic wastewater being dumped into a river at the Gold King Mine in Colorado.

The plume of toxic liquid flowed downstream to New Mexico and polluted the Navajo Nation's main source of drinking and irrigation water.

In Flint, Michigan, aging pipes and improperly treated water caused lead poisoning in children. When EPA officials learned of the pending disaster, they failed to respond.

The agency's misplaced priorities are harming state governments as well.

North Dakota stands to lose more than $100 million in tax revenue over the next four years because of the Obama administration's ''clean power plan'' regulations. The state will have to look to already-strapped families to make up the difference or else cut back on services.

Disregard for the consequences of its actions has become the trademark of the EPA for the last eight years. Policy goals and talking points have consistently taken priority over American families. This cannot be the case any longer.

As chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I look forward to ushering in wholesale change at the EPA. I will be doing it alongside a committed and capable administrator.

President-elect Trump has named Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA and to overhaul the agency. Attorney General Pruitt has seen the effects of over regulation in his own state and has worked to stop them.

Pruitt has distinguished himself by challenging the Obama administration on several of its most burdensome rules. He stood up for Oklahomans against the EPA's extreme regulations on greenhouse gasses, methane emissions, and cross state air pollution. He took action against unworkable water rules and air standards. He sued the federal government to make sure that it was interpreting the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts as Congress actually wrote them, not how it benefited President Obama's political agenda.

Attorney General Pruitt is respected by his peers for the work he has done. His work in Oklahoma protected the environment and strengthened the economy by standing up for states' rights. Attorneys general from 24 states authored a letter in support of his nomination. They know he can and will rein in Washington.

President-elect Trump has vowed that his administration will overturn two federal regulations for every new one it proposes. The administrator of EPA will play a vital role in keeping that promise. He must make sure that the agency meets its mission of protecting our environment—ensuring clean water, air, and land—while allowing our economy to grow.

Our committee is taking up the nomination of Attorney General Pruitt this week. I look forward to hearing more about his vision for the agency and how he will help get Americans back to work.

The EPA has made the last eight years hard for families in Wyoming and across rural America. Today, there is reason to be hopeful.

The status quo at the EPA is changing.

'THE STRONG LEADER THE EPA NEEDS'

(By John Barrasso)

The Environmental Protection Agency needs reform.

Anyone who doubts the deterioration at this once-respected agency should recall the summer of 2015, when the EPA spilled more than 3 million gallons of toxic wastewater into a Colorado river.

Last month, the EPA denied $1.2 billion in damage claims from farmers, Native American tribes and small businesses. This disaster followed the EPA's mishandling of the water crisis in Flint, Mich.

The government agency responsible for protecting the environment and the health of Americans has been endangering the public's health.

The EPA has become a bloated regulatory behemoth that has lost sight of the needs of the American people and the environment. The agency's bureaucrats have been more preoccupied with pushing punishing new regulations.

This red tape killed thousands of jobs in energy-producing and manufacturing states such as West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Indiana, North Dakota and my state of Wyoming.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, President Trump's nominee to lead the EPA, is committed to protecting the environment—ensuring clean air, water and land—while allowing the American economy to grow.

Pruitt will be the strong leader the EPA needs. He has seen the consequences of the agency's overreach, and he has worked to restore its original focus. He negotiated a water rights settlement with tribes to preserve scenic lakes and rivers.

He worked with Dustin McDaniel, a Democrat and former Arkansas attorney general, to reduce pollution in the Illinois River, which flows between their two states. He stood up to oil and gas companies that polluted his state's air and water. Pruitt has won bipartisan recognition and support. McDaniel called him a ''staunch defender of sound science and good policy as appropriate tools to protect the environment.''

Scott Pruitt will be an excellent EPA administrator, committed to reform.

STATE OF ALABAMA,
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,
Montgomery, AL, January 4, 2017.

Hon. JOHN BARRASSO,
Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, District of Columbia.

Hon. TOM CARPER,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, District of Columbia.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BARRASSO AND RANKING MEMBER CARPER: As the attorneys general of our respective states, we write to express our unqualified support for our colleague and the Attorney General of Oklahoma, E. Scott Pruitt, as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

As attorneys general, we understand the need to work collaboratively to address threats to our environment that cross state lines, as well as the importance of a federal counterpart in the EPA Administrator who possesses the knowledge, experience, and principles to work with our states to address issues affecting our environment. We believe that no one exemplifies these qualities more than Scott Pruitt.

As the Attorney General of Oklahoma, Mr. Pruitt developed expertise in environmental law and policy. He negotiated a historic water rights settlement with Indian tribes that preserved the ecosystems of scenic lakes and rivers; he worked with his Democrat counterpart in Arkansas to reduce pollution in the Illinois River; and he represented the interests of Oklahomans in rate cases against utility companies and in numerous actions against those who contaminated his state's air and water.

Attorney General Pruitt is committed to clean air and clean water, and to faithfully executing the environmental laws written by Congress. He believes that environmental regulations should be driven by State and local governments—a notion endorsed by Congress in the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. When our nation is confronted with issues affecting the environment that are not covered by a particular statute, Scott will come to Congress for a solution, rather than inventing power for his agency. He wholeheartedly believes in a strong Environmental Protection Agency that carries out its proper duties, providing a backstop to state and local regulators as they develop environmental regulations suited to the needs of their own communities.

Scott Pruitt is more than just an exemplary state attorney general, he is also our friend. A man of deep faith who is committed to his family and to his friends, Scott seeks always to do the right thing. His friendship and leadership have been invaluable to us over the years.

The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency plays a critical role in our Nation's government. Attorney General Pruitt has proven over the course of his career that he has the right character, experience, and knowledge to serve as the Administrator of the EPA. We urge the Senate to confirm his nomination.

Sincerely,

Jeff Landry, Attorney General, State of Louisiana; Alan Wilson, Attorney General, State of South Carolina; Luther Strange, Attorney General, State of Alabama; Marty Jackley, Attorney General, State of South Dakota; Patrick Morrisey, Attorney General, State of West Virginia; Adam Laxalt, Attorney General, State of Nevada; Mark Brnovich, Attorney General, State of Arizona; Herbert Slatery, Attorney General, State of Tennessee.

Curtis Hill, Attorney General, State of Indiana; Brad Schimel, Attorney General, State of Wisconsin; Ken Paxton, Attorney General, State of Texas; Bill Schuette, Attorney General, State of Michigan; Doug Peterson, Attorney General, State of Nebraska; Chris Carr, Attorney General, State of Georgia; Sean Reyes, Attorney General, State of Utah; Wayne Stenehjem, Attorney General, State of North Dakota.

Leslie Rutledge, Attorney General, State of Arkansas; Pam Bondi, Attorney General, State of Florida; Lawrence Wasden, Attorney General, State of Idaho; Tim Fox, Attorney General, State of Montana; Derek Schmidt, Attorney General, State of Kansas; Josh Hawley, Attorney General, State of Missouri; Peter Michael, Attorney General, State of Wyoming; Mike DeWine, Attorney General, State of Ohio.

MCDANIEL RICHARDSON
& CALHOUN, PLLC,
Little Rock, AR, January 18, 2017.

Re Attorney General Scott Pruitt's Nomination To Serve as Director of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Hon. JOHN BARRASSO,
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, Washington, DC.

Hon. TOM CARPER,
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, Dirksen Senate Office Building.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BARRASSO, RANKING MEMBER CARPER, AND MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: My name is Dustin McDaniel. I am an attorney in Little Rock, Arkansas. I served as the Democratic Attorney General of the Stale of Arkansas from 2007–2015. During that time, I served for three years as the Co-Chair of the Democratic Attorneys General Association, I am a member of the Democratic National Committee and was a strong supporter of Secretary Clinton's campaign for President. I am grateful for your work on this committee. I believe in the core mission of the Environmental Protection Agency. I believe that climate change is real and overwhelmingly the result of human activity. I believe that the United States has a moral obligation to lead the world in shaping climate policy. These challenges in a hostile political environment will be acutely felt by the next director of the EPA.

As you consider the nomination of my friend Scott Pruitt, I respectfully ask that you enter this letter into the record so that I may attempt to clarify what I believe to be unfair criticisms of the historic agreement negotiated between myself on behalf of the State of Arkansas and Attorney General Pruitt on behalf of the State of Oklahoma regarding water quality in the Illinois River watershed.

Prior to the elections of General Pruitt or myself, Oklahoma grappled with Arkansas municipal water systems and Arkansas industry, primarily poultry companies, over increased phosphorous levels in the Illinois River watershed. Pollution was substantially impacting the water quality in one of Oklahoma's most scenic waterways. In 2003, an agreement was executed that would require that the phosphorus levels be reduced over the next 10 years to a level .037 parts per million. As a result, all parties on both sides of the state line worked diligently to substantially improve the water quality.

At the same time, then-Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson filed suit using an out of state plaintiffs' firm against Arkansas's poultry industry. Many criticized the litigation as taking the focus away from the environment and placing it on money damages. The State of Oklahoma's outside counsel presented their case to U.S. District Court Judge Gregory Frizzell. Almost all the claims were dismissed by the court. The evidence was fully submitted to the judge in March of 2010 on the remaining question regarding injunctive relief. To this day, no ruling in that litigation has been handed down,

As 2013, the ten-year deadline for the reduced phosphorus levels, was approaching, two things were evident: 1.) despite huge improvements in water quality, the phosphorus levels in the river would not be at .037 parts per million before the deadline, and 2.) research into the standard itself called into question its origin and basis in hard science.

The States of Arkansas and Oklahoma were facing a point of litigating against one another (again) over this issue to the detriment of all concerned, I approached General Pruitt to ask if we could reach a solution that would protect the environment and demonstrate to our citizens that we were committed to working together on their behalf rather than litigating against one another using taxpayer dollars for lawyers instead of scientists.

The resulting agreement reflects that Oklahoma enhanced, not relaxed, its enforcement of environmental protections. Scientists were appointed to establish the proper water quality metrics, establish a binding standard, and at no time were phosphorous abatement measures relaxed. It was an historic moment that demonstrated that cooperation in pursuit of environmental protection yielded better results than litigation. The resulting report was recently released from the commission and is available for your review, (See, www.ok.gov/conservation/documents/IR%20
2016.12.19%20Final%20Report.pdf)

Recent press accounts regarding these efforts unfairly mischaracterize the work that was done by General Pruitt and his team, He was a staunch defender of sound science and good policy as appropriate tools to protect the environment of his state. I saw firsthand how General Pruitt was able to bridge political divides and manage multiple agency agendas to reach an outcome that was heralded by most credible observers as both positive and historic.

As I am sure that this committee will have questions about this matter, I wanted to take this opportunity to add facts and context to an accomplishment that should stand as a credit to General Pruitt's career and qualifications for this nomination.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter to you and to your committee and to be a part of the record in these proceedings. I thank you for your service to our nation,

Respectfully submitted,

DUSTIN MCDANIEL.

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION,
Oklahoma City, OK, January 15, 2017.

Re Debunking New York Times article, ''Scott Pruitt, Trump's E.P.A. Pick, Backed Industry Donors Over Regulators,'' January 14, 2017.

Hon. JOHN BARRASSO,
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, Washington, DC.
Hon. TOM CARPER,
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BARRASSO AND RANKING MEMBER CARPER: Rarely do I feel compelled to respond to a newspaper article, particularly one that runs in a nationally renowned news outlet like the New York Times. I've learned over 23–years as a State environmental regulator to value the media's role in uncovering and exposing the truth, not to mention the wisdom found in the quote, ''Never pick a fight with anyone who buys ink by the barrel.'' However, the mistruths propagated by the above captioned article undoubtedly caught the attention of you, your fellow committee members, and many of your respective constituents just days before Attorney General Scott Pruitt's confirmation hearing for EPA Administrator, and thus deserve a response from at least one of the regulators that allegedly lost out to industry donors.

First, it's worth noting that I spoke with the New York Times for nearly fifteen minutes laying out the facts from my perspective as Oklahoma's former Secretary of Environment and a plaintiff in the state's litigation against the poultry industry, then later as Director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board—the agency responsible for establishing the phosphorus standard referenced in the article. One would think such experience deserves significant play in an article of this focus, yet more column space was devoted to a retired employee of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality who was incorrectly listed as the leader of the agency's Water Quality Division and wrongfully given credit for being responsible for ''overseeing the poultry-related cleanup.'' The poultry industry and its related cleanup are governed by our Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry. Rather than insinuating that Mr. Derichsweiler retired out of frustration with General Pruitt, instead of the fact that he retired after 40 years of service to the State, the New York Times should have at least divulged that Derichsweiler currently serves as Vice Chair of the Oklahoma Chapter of Sierra Club, an organization that has launched a campaign to oppose General Pruitt's confirmation.

The facts that I shared in my interview with the New York Times paint a completely different picture than the article portrays. If I were writing the headline, it would read, ''Pruitt Helps Deliver Water Quality Improvement in Oklahoma's Scenic Rivers.'' At the end of the day, that has been Oklahoma's goal in the Illinois River watershed for decades, and that is what is happening during General Pruitt's term as Attorney General. As I stated to the New York Times, no State Attorney General can force a Federal Judge to rule, or I'm certain former Attorney General Drew Edmondson would have taken such action during his last two years in office. Rather than beating his head against that wall, Pruitt helped Oklahoma negotiate a new agreement with the State of Arkansas that prompted not just a study of the appropriate phosphorus level necessary to protect our shared scenic rivers, which the article dismissed as trivial, but more importantly provided for continued phosphorus controls on wastewater and poultry facilities. For the first time in my career, Oklahoma measured decreasing phosphorus levels and water quality improvement in the Illinois River watershed beginning in 2012. While many people on both sides of the border deserve credit for this result, General Pruitt definitely was a key player. This mere ''study'' ultimately led to a recent agreement between the states of Arkansas and Oklahoma wherein Arkansas committed to meet a more stringent phosphorus standard—another shocking development for two states that have quarreled for decades and quite the opposite result one would expect from an Attorney General that is being unfairly maligned as a shill for industry.

Rather than spend several more pages contesting the inaccuracies found in the New York Times article, I will leave you with this overarching truth. As a fifth generation Oklahoman and someone that has devoted my career to natural resource protection, I take great pride in the progress that has been made in improving Oklahoma's land, air, water and wildlife resources. For the past six years, General Pruitt has been instrumental in many of our successes and has never asked me to compromise regulatory efforts to benefit industry. On the contrary, all of our projects and cases that involved his office were given staff support at the highest level and, more often than not, resulted in more stringent environmental protections, Please do not confuse Pruitt as being anti-environment because of his well justified (and strongly supported by me) efforts to counter the EPA's various attempts to second-guess or usurp State authority. Rather, he has been a strong ally in defending our ability to continue the great progress that we've made in protecting Oklahoma's environment at the state level—progress that is too often impeded by Federal overreach and interference.

If I can be of further assistance as you embark on your important task of reviewing Mr. Pruitt's qualifications and disposition to serve as EPA Administrator, please do not hesitate to contact me. I've always found Mr. Pruitt to be a man of great honesty and integrity, so you should have the perfect opportunity in your hearing to gather facts before making your final decision. If truth prevails, you will find what most of us in Oklahoma know to be true: Scott Pruitt stands for responsible, common sense, State-led environmental protection efforts that generate positive results.

Respectfully,

J.D. STRONG,
Director.

[Jan. 12, 2017]

A FIRSTHAND PERSPECTIVE FROM A MAN IN THE MIDDLE: PRUITT NOMINATION IS WELCOME

(By Ed Fite)

We have all heard much yammering, left and right, about President-elect Donald Trump having selected Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt as the next head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As a conservationist and riverologist, I have worked firsthand with Scott Pruitt and know a good deal more about him than those nationally that are attempting to malign him.

I have made it my life's work and my career to look after our states designated Scenic Rivers. As a state employee and a resource facilitator (I cannot take care of these valued-treasured water resources by myself), I always find myself arguing for the middle ground, for the workable solution upon which both sides of an issue can agree. I have looked and worked for real solutions, and have implemented them with help from all sides.

I have found that General Pruitt has always done right by our Scenic Rivers. He has done every constructive thing that he told me he would do. Furthermore, for the first time ever, he has gotten the State of Arkansas, which happens to have portions of the streams we've designated as ''scenic rivers'' originating in and flowing through their state, to agree to Oklahoma's Scenic Rivers Phosphorus Standard—an incredible environmental accomplishment, the impact of which cannot be understated. Instead of engaging in years of inter-state litigation, he did this by negotiating an agreement with Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel, a practical and economical approach that will yield enormous environmental benefits.

To understand the magnitude of this agreement, one must consider that Oklahoma and Arkansas have litigated over Illinois River water quality for more than three decades. The latest action brought by Oklahoma, about abating water quality degradation from the land-application of poultry waste in the Illinois River watershed, has languished for more than six years in the federal district court. Many thought that when General Pruitt took office he would abandon this suit because he is also known for his staunch support of farming and ranching communities. However, not only did General Pruitt allow the case to be fully litigated, he proactively sought this joint state solution to let science determine the phosphorus standard for the Illinois River. In the end, a study conducted by Baylor University reinforced that the phosphorus standard Oklahoma sought to protect would remain.

Last, I have not seen him advocate dismantling the EPA. Rather, he has rightfully supported necessary laws but has challenged the agency when they have written new rules without Congress having given them authority to do so. An administrative agency should not decide what the law is in the absence of legislation.

And so, my middle-of-the-river view is that Scott Pruitt is one who is committed to finding a balance that protects and preserves our environment while at the same time affords an opportunity for a robust economy to exist. Achievement of one doesn't have to be exclusive of the other.

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I just want to follow up on the comments of my friend, the chairman from Wyoming, and I note that Scott Pruitt has responded to more questions than anyone in EPA history since Gina McCarthy, the past Administrator who responded to more than 1,400 questions, and she actually responded to them completely, not evasively and not indirectly. She needed more time, given the volume of questions, and more time was granted so she might more fully answer the questions that were raised. I just wanted to add that if I could.

Mr. President, I come to the floor to share with you and with our colleagues the reasons I oppose the nomination of Attorney General Scott Pruitt to be the EPA Administrator. Over the last month, we have had a number of President Trump's nominees come before the committee and be debated on the Senate floor, as you know.

We have had multiple confirmation hearings in a single day, with Members

running to and from hearings trying to learn more about nominees and get important questions answered. So I understand if some of my colleagues who have attended back-to-back hearings have not yet delved into Scott Pruitt's record as deeply as we have on the Environment and Public Works Committee, and that is why we are here today.

As ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I, along with my colleagues on the committee, have scoured Mr. Pruitt's record to the best of our ability with the somewhat limited information the nominee has provided.

We sat through his nomination hearing, where we asked him fundamental questions about his views on the role of the EPA and what he would do to protect our environment and public health. We submitted additional questions we had for the record and read through all of Mr. Pruitt's responses. We have done our due diligence with the information we received, and I want to share with my colleagues and all of those watching exactly why, based on this review, I cannot support Mr. Pruitt's nomination.

First, I think it is important to revisit just why the EPA is still so critical. This Agency was created 46 years ago by a Republican President named Richard Nixon with the support of a bipartisan Congress. Their task was implementing our Nation's most important clean air, clean water, and safe chemical laws. The EPA is required to use sound science to protect both our environment and our public health, and, by and large, the EPA has done it successfully—not perfectly but successfully for decades while our economy has continued to grow. Many people may not remember a time before the EPA, a time when States had to work individually to protect citizens in the communities in which they lived, a time before the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act were signed into law, a time when businesses operating throughout the United States were faced with a myriad of conflicting State and local laws affecting our health and environment. The choking smog and soot of a half century ago seems unfathomable now. Rivers on fire and deadly toxic plumes sound like something almost for another world, impossible in our United States of America.

Today we have the luxury of largely forgetting these frightening circumstances, thanks to the efforts of the EPA and its employees, in partnership with State and local governments and with countries and companies and businesses across America. The EPA and its many partners throughout the country have been so successful that it is easy for some of us to forget why this Agency is so critical. Some may presume there is not much more for this Agency to do. That could not be further from the truth.

The environmental threats we face today are real. They don't respect State boundaries. Over time, my State of Delaware has made great strides in cleaning up our own air pollution, but our work only goes so far.

In Delaware, like many States on the east coast, we sit at the end of what is known as America's tailpipe. Ninety percent of the pollution in Delaware comes from outside the First State, from plants hundreds of miles away in places like Kentucky, Ohio, my native West Virginia, Indiana, and throughout the Midwest.

As Governor of Delaware, even if I had eliminated every source of air pollution within our State by stopping every combustion source and ordering every motor vehicle off our roads, Delawareans would still face deadly doses of air pollution. Should Delawareans be forced to live with consequences of decisions made by polluters hundreds or even thousands of miles away from us? I don't think so. I don't think so. That is not the Golden Rule I know.

Fortunately, the EPA has recently implemented something called the good neighbor rule to make sure all States do their fair share to clean up our air. Every citizen in this country has a right to breathe clean air, regardless of where they live, whether they live in a downwind or an upwind State. That is why we have the EPA.

We have known for decades that most of the mercury in our fish comes from air pollution that is emitted from the dirtiest coal plants and then settles in our waterways. We know mercury is a powerful neurotoxin that accumulates in our body over time, threatening the health of this generation and generations to come. The EPA recently issued public health protections to clean up the toxic air pollution from our dirtiest coal plants, allowing families in Danville, where I grew up alongside the Dan River, and thousands of other communities that can once again eat fish from our rivers, lakes, and streams without concern of mercury poisoning. That is why we have the EPA.

Too often, when States and local communities are pinched for cash, they try to save money by shortchanging clean air and water protections. Improvements to infrastructure are often ignored, corners are cut, and solutions are adopted that may save dollars now but inflict costly unnecessary damage later.

As we have seen most recently in the city of Flint, MI, these cuts can have a terrible and even tragic impact on the health of the most vulnerable in our society, especially on the youngest among us. Today, the citizens of Flint still lack clean drinking water, and a new generation in that city which has been exposed to high levels of lead faces an uncertain future. That is why we have the EPA.

Many people don't know it, but Delaware is the lowest lying State in our Nation. The highest point in the State of Delaware is a bridge. Back home, the reality that our climate is changing is not up for debate. Families and business owners face the stark realities of climate change almost every single day. Tackling that challenge is not just the right thing to do or what is best for Delaware's economy, it is a matter of survival. Our little State alone cannot stem the flow of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere that is largely causing our climate to change, our seas to rise, and our coastlines to retreat. Every State—every State—must do its fair share to safeguard our climate and their neighbors. That is why we have the EPA.

Examples of the air and water pollution produced by one State and fouling the air and water of others can still be found in too many parts of America, like the runoff from Pennsylvania that degrades the waters of the Chesapeake Bay or the haze exported from other States that oftentimes shrouds the Smoky Mountains and degrades visibility at the Grand Canyon. That is why we have the EPA.

Throughout my years in the Senate and as a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I have had the opportunity to consider the credentials of five different nominees to serve as EPA Administrator—individuals put forth by both Democratic and Republican Presidents. I have supported candidates in the past because they were able to clearly demonstrate their commitment—candidates like former New Jersey Republican Governor Christine Whitman and former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt. I was proud to support them both, proud of their service, and proud of their role as head of EPA. But I have supported candidates like them because they clearly demonstrated their commitment to advancing the mission of the EPA—the mission to protect human health and to protect our environment. Never have I been forced to consider a candidate to lead the EPA who has been so focused throughout his career on crippling the Agency he now seeks to lead or so hostile to the basic protections to keep Americans and our environment safe.

So, with that, I am going to close, and I will come back many times in the hours to come as we continue the consideration of this candidate's nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I am here to address an issue that I think is of great importance to this country and to this administration; that is, the nomination of Scott Pruitt to be the new EPA Administrator.

We are nearly 8 years removed now from what we consider—many of us, I think, particularly as we look back—the great recession. However, many American workers, their families, and their communities have yet to feel the benefits of any kind of a recovery. A key component to a slow recovery—the

slowest recovery since World War I—is the regulatory overreach coming out of this city—Washington, DC.

Since the end of the recession in June 2009, Federal agencies have burdened a weakened economy with thousands of pages of new rules, costing consumers billions of dollars. Tens of thousands of workers have lost their jobs. The EPA has perhaps become the poster child for this overreach, from restricting carbon emissions without the direction of Congress—and according to the clean air direction of Congress of what is important—to federalizing every stream, every pond, every wetland under the waters of the United States rule, to unilaterally banning virtually Appalachian coal mining by obstructing the permitting process and pursuing ozone standards that the vast majority of the country cannot meet. The vast majority of the country is still trying to meet the ozone standards that were established under the last regulation.

I support the mission of the EPA in protecting human health, in protecting our air and our water, but there has to be a balance. There has to be a balance between growing the economy and preserving the environment. Over the last several years, we have seen that balance very disrupted. This disruption is at odds with the law and the well-being of many of our working families.

This has been acutely felt in my State of West Virginia where we have lost more than 35 percent of our coal jobs since the year 2011. That is more than 7,000 jobs eliminated in a relatively small State like West Virginia, and many of these jobs are very high-paying jobs.

As a nation, we have lost more than 60,000 coal miners in the same timeframe. This has hurt our workers, our families, our communities, and our State.

The loss of good-paying jobs means less commercial activity. It means less tax revenue to support our education, our county school systems, our county ambulances, our county sheriff's departments, and our law enforcement. For example, little old Wayne County in West Virginia has lost 88 percent of its coal severance taxes between 2013 and 2016. This year, our Governor and our legislature are struggling right now with a $500 million budget deficit, largely due to the loss of our coal jobs.

Patching that shortfall could mean significant tax increases, painful cuts in public services, or both, which could further hurt and cripple our local economy. It will be a long road undoing the legal and economic damages suffered over the last several years.

Voters in my State and across the country have made it clear that fixing Washington includes meaningful reforms for the way that the EPA operates and has been operating.

So what do we have before us? We have a great nominee for EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt, who is presently the attorney general of another energy-producing State—Oklahoma. Scott is committed to returning the Agency to its core mission of protecting our air, our water, and our land without undercutting the economy. At least, we know that he will listen to the other side and try to be reasonable.

He will ensure that the EPA abides by congressional intent, and he will be an active partner with State and local stakeholders in the rulemaking process.

Going back to the stream buffer rule and the reason that fell apart—and I am so pleased that the President is going to be signing the CRA on that today—the EPA invited States to come in and speak about the rulemaking process. Within months, it became very apparent to the States that are charged with protecting the water that this is just window dressing. They realized: They are not listening to us, and they don't really want us to buy in. Eight of those States left.

So as the attorney general for the State of Oklahoma, he has held industry to account as well protected lakes and streams in his State. I asked him in the committee: If the State or local government doesn't intervene in what looks to be an environmental issue—not just a crisis, but if they are not doing their job in protecting the air and the water—what would you do as the EPA Administrator? He said: That is where we should be stepping in. That is where we should be helping those States meet those standards, helping those States get the right information.

So I think he is going to be unafraid to take on the EPA when it is set to ignore a State's sovereignty.

Mr. Pruitt is the most thoroughly vetted candidate for this position in history. He fielded 6 hours' worth of questioning before the Committee on Environment and Public Works, where I serve. During that hearing, he assured me that he will engage directly with the State of West Virginia and visit our State. We could never get the EPA Administrator to visit our State and listen to our side. He will visit our State, listen to our side, and reform the rulemaking process to prevent another open assault on our economy by unelected bureaucrats.

He also committed to me that he would pursue full implementation of the bipartisan Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a bill on which we joined together—Republicans and Democrats, both sides of the aisle, with President Obama—to modernize our toxic chemical regulations in terms of water.

This is important to me. I was talking to my colleague from Michigan about this issue. We had a water crisis in West Virginia where we had a large chemical spill. This bill, under Scott Pruitt's leadership and my pressing for the implementation, as others will be, will help us in situations like this.

Beyond the over 200 questions he answered in the hearing, he answered more than 1,000 followup questions. He is the most thoroughly vetted nominee for Administrator in the history of the EPA. I am confident—very confident—as he assured me in committee and in personal meetings, and I have watched him in action in terms of questioning the overreach in the court systems. He has worked with our attorney general, Patrick Morrisey, to be the leader in this.

I have confidence that he embodies the leadership that we need to restore the balance and accountability to the EPA in a way that will benefit the public health and benefit environmental preservation, as well as restore much-needed economic growth that needs to be a part of the balance that we want to see restored back to the EPA.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, let me say first that I join with the distinguished Senator from West Virginia in expressing concern about our water infrastructure and water issues. As many of us know, we have had terrific challenges in Flint, MI, with an entire water system being unable to be used because of lead poisoning and the terrible decisions made, primarily at the State level.

I was very concerned—when I speak about Mr. Pruitt and his nomination—that when asked by Senator CARDIN if he believes there is any safe level of lead that can be taken into the human body, particularly a young person, he said that this is something he hasn't reviewed and doesn't know anything about. That is deeply concerning to me—that the person who would be heading the EPA would not know anything about lead poisoning and what that means, first of all, in a child's body, where it is poisoned and affects their development throughout their life. It is critically important for us in Michigan—and there are many, many places where there are serious water quality issues that need to be addressed—that we have someone who understands the science and the need for clean water rules and protecting our waters so that any family, any community can have the confidence of turning on the faucet and knowing that there is going to be clean water coming out into their sink in their home. It is very concerning to me that we have a nominee who indicated that he really didn't know anything about this issue.

So for that and a number of reasons—many, many reasons—I am joining with so many colleagues in opposing Scott Pruitt to be the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA Administrator is a very important position. As I indicated, to those of us in Michigan, surrounded by the beauty of the Great Lakes, having the responsibility for protecting the Great Lakes, this is a very, very important position.

After examining Mr. Pruitt's record on a broad range of issues, as well as

his views about the Agency he has been nominated to lead, I have significant concerns about the direction and the priorities the EPA would take if he becomes Administrator.

Now, this is not based on partisan politics. When George W. Bush was President, I joined 98 of my colleagues to vote to confirm Christie Todd Whitman to be EPA Administrator. Two years later, I was among 87 other Members of the Senate to vote to confirm Michael Leavitt to succeed her at the EPA.

But the facts are—the evidence is—that Scott Pruitt does not have the requisite experience and track record to successfully lead an Agency that plays such a critical role in protecting the health and the well-being of the American people, and, certainly, the people that I represent in the great State of Michigan.

As I mentioned before, we are very, very familiar with the importance of clean water and the consequences of environmental mismanagement. We need an EPA that will act quickly when there is a crisis like the one that happened in Flint, which is, unfortunately, still going on. This was a man-made crisis inflicted by the State of Michigan's actions on a number of different levels that created a situation where the State would rather save $100 a day than treat the water for lead corrosion. So $100 a day they wanted to save rather than treat the water to prevent children and families from being exposed to lead-tainted water. This was a State decision.

Mr. Pruitt has made it clear that it is his intention to defer as much as possible to States—to States like Michigan, which didn't treat the water, then didn't tell the truth, then covered it up, and still has not done—despite Congress and the President together acting to support that community, the State still has not stepped up to meet their responsibilities. After more than 2 years, people still cannot turn on the faucet and have confidence that they are going to have clean water. Yet Mr. Pruitt says the State ought to be the one making these decisions.

While I firmly believe an effective EPA is one that works closely and often in concert with State and local communities, we must also be sure we have leadership at the EPA that is willing and capable of providing the oversight necessary to ensure environmental and public health standards.

We also need an EPA Administrator whom we can trust to protect and preserve our amazing Great Lakes. Critical to this objective is a grant program administered by the EPA called Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. I was very pleased to champion and help launch this in 2010 with strong support from the Obama administration. This accelerates efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes by providing grants to clean up contaminated areas; prevent and control invasive species, things like Asian carp, which we are constantly having to focus on to push back these fish from destroying our fisheries and boating operations and environments in the Great Lakes; to address harmful algae blooms and restore habitat; and to protect native species.

Scott Pruitt's long record of opposing nearly all Federal environmental programs raises serious questions to me about his commitment to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and all of the efforts we have worked on in a bipartisan, bicameral way to make sure we are protecting 20 percent of the world's freshwater, 30 million people's drinking water, and a huge economic engine called the Great Lakes.

I always like to say the Great Lakes are in our DNA, and that is very true for all of us who live in Michigan and certainly around the Great Lakes because we understand that this great natural resource supports more than 1.5 million jobs and nearly $62 billion in wages tied to jobs and industries, and, frankly, it reflects our wonderful quality of life in Michigan.

I also have great concerns about Mr. Pruitt's long-running opposition to the landmark renewable fuel standard, which puts him at odds with the Agency that administers the program. The President promised us a farmer-friendly EPA. Yet this nominee to lead the Agency wants to dismantle one of the most successful economic drivers in rural America. Mr. Pruitt has repeatedly spoken out against the renewable fuel standard, calling the program flawed and unworkable.

Mr. Pruitt heading up EPA, coupled with former ExxonMobil executive Rex Tillerson at the State Department and oil refinery owner Carl Icahn advising the White House, may well be the end of the RFS as we know it. That is, frankly, bad news for biofuels producers in Michigan, bad news for Americans who care about creating economic growth and jobs in rural communities, and bad news for small towns and communities throughout Michigan. Mr. Pruitt's record of siding with polluters over sound science puts him outside the mainstream of what we should expect from our EPA Administrator.

It is for these reasons that I intend to vote against his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I also rise to oppose the nomination of Scott Pruitt as EPA Administrator.

To summarize—and then I will go into some detail—Virginians are pro-science people. The political figure we most venerate is still Thomas Jefferson, who was the preeminent scientist of his day. We are pro-science people. Second, the evidence from Mr. Pruitt's career demonstrates he is anti-science in the climate area and possibly others. Third, there is no position in the Federal Government that more relies upon accurate science and scientistic judgement than EPA Administrator.

I think the President is afforded significant discretion in appointing members of the Cabinet, and I have voted to confirm a number of President Trump's nominees even if I wouldn't have nominated them myself because I think they meet the basic test of competence and integrity. But I have voted against individuals if they can't satisfy me that they meet our ethical standards or that they are qualified for the position or that they are able to do the job fairly and objectively.

The ability of the EPA Administrator to do this job fairly and objectively requires an acknowledgement of the scientific reality of climate change and other science. This isn't an abstract matter for Virginia, and it is not an abstract matter for the EPA Administrator.

Next only to coastal Louisiana, Virginia is the most susceptible State to sea level rise. Hampton Roads, VA, with 1.6 million people—our second largest metropolitan area—not only is it a busy and thriving metropolitan area, but it is the center of American naval power and the largest base of naval operations in the world. It is the homeport for the U.S. Atlantic fleet. What we are seeing throughout Hampton Roads, VA, is that neighborhoods where you could sell and buy a house 15 years ago, you now can't because normal tidal action renders the homes impossible to sell. It affects businesses.

By 2040, the main road into the largest naval base in the world, Norfolk, will be covered 2 to 3 hours a day just by normal tidal action, not by storm surges, which make it more significant. So now the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Chesapeake, Newport News, and Hampton are all trying to figure out ways to make resiliency investments to protect against sea level rise, and the Department of Defense is having to contemplate the same kinds of investments to protect our naval operations in Hampton Roads.

The EPA's mission and its entire existence revolve around science. To enforce the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, to set limits on pollutants that are stringent enough to have measurable benefits but reasonable enough to avoid negative economic impacts to the degree we can, and to pore over reams and reams of data and analysis and figure out whether a chemical in a consumer product is harmful takes science. To analyze whether fracking or some other method of extracting energy is dangerous to drinking water or not dangerous or somewhere in the middle or what the right limits should be takes science.

In an earlier iteration, I was the mayor of Richmond. My city has a river in the middle of it that was so polluted—the James River—you couldn't swim in it and you couldn't fish in it. There was no bird life in it because it had been polluted over such a long time. Today, go to Richmond, VA, and you will see people canoeing

and kayaking. You will see people fishing and taking the fish home to eat. You will see people swimming. It has gone from the sewer of our city to the front yard of our city, to the thing that has helped bring population back into downtown Richmond and grow our population, and it happened because of the Clean Water Act.

There is always a question in regulation—too hot, too cold, or just right. But my city would not be what it is today had there not been a Clean Water Act that required us—in some ways that were painful at times—to save the river, and now it has herons, bald eagles, fish, kayakers, and canoeists, and everybody's quality of life and the economy are better too.

Mr. Pruitt has been asked repeatedly about his views on climate science. Just 4 months ago, he stated:

> We've done a lot [in reducing carbon emissions], and that's not even addressing, guys, the fact that there's a tremendous dispute, as you know, that's going on in the marketplace about how much this global warming trend that the [Obama] administration talks about, if it's true or not.
>
> Is it truly man-made and is this simply just another period of time where the Earth is cooling, increasing in heat? I mean is it just typical natural type of occurrences as opposed to what the Administration says?

That was just 4 months ago. This kind of skepticism—we don't know whether humans cause it; we don't know whether it is natural—is exactly the kind of thing we have seen in Congress before. There was a famous hearing in Congress that was sort of emblazoned on people's memories of a whole bunch of witnesses standing up and swearing to tell the truth and saying: We don't know that there is a connection between cigarette smoking and cancer. This kind of denial of the scientific consensus from an Administrator of the chief agency that needs science in this country is deeply troubling.

I don't think it should be going out on a limb to declare that climate change is happening, driven largely by the burning of fossil fuels, and is a problem we have to deal with in some way. How to deal with it, how quickly to deal with it—those are tough questions, but acknowledging the science should not be tough.

That acknowledgement of the science was the policy of a predecessor of mine, Virginia Senator John Warner, a Republican, who introduced one of the first climate bills in Congress with Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman in 2006. This policy that we recognize science was the policy of the George H.W. Bush administration, which negotiated the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change more than 25 years ago. It was the policy that underlay the Presidential campaign of one of our colleagues, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, in 2008.

Acknowledging the science of climate change isn't a matter of political views; it is a matter of science and reality. We can discuss and debate what to do about it, and I think those are challenging discussions to have. That is fair game. Differences of opinion about what to do about—that is fair game. But denying an overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change exists and that it is driven by human activity in the burning of fossil fuels—something ExxonMobil scientists were agreeing to in papers written in the 1980s, not 4 months ago—denying that is a denial of science.

I worry. If Mr. Pruitt denies science on this matter, what other science will he deny? His record as attorney general in Oklahoma bears me out on my worry to some degree. In virtually every decision, the attorney general's office defended the interests of oil and gas, of Big Agribusiness, and basically the interests of polluters against the interests of clean air and water, which are the interests of our families and our kids.

A New York Times article from 2 years ago—before Mr. Pruitt was nominated for this position—identified that when the EPA was looking at the potential impacts—potential, not guaranteed; we are trying to determine if there are impacts—of fracking on water quality and seismic instability, Attorney General Pruitt submitted comments on behalf of the State of Oklahoma that expressed skepticism that fracking was causing any problems. Well, why not do the investigation? Why not get to the bottom of it? Was the opinion that he expressed backed by science? Was it backed by a deep analysis that had been done by scientists or smart attorneys in Mr. Pruitt's office? No. In this instance, good investigative journalism determined that the comment expressing skepticism about fracking having any effect on water quality was actually written by an energy company, copied, and pasted onto official Oklahoma letterhead and submitted to the EPA as representing the views of Oklahoma public officials.

Would it be appropriate for the attorney general of Oklahoma—a State that has significant oil and gas—to take into account the views of oil and gas producers on something as important as fracking? Absolutely. In fact, you would not be doing your job if you didn't take the views of those companies into account. But considering industry views is very different from taking their views and portraying them as coming from you, a holder of a public trust who is supposed to be working for everybody and not just one company or one industry.

Here is one more example I will give before I conclude, because I take it personally. Virginia is one of the six States in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. I worked on this matter as Governor of Virginia, along with colleagues in the other States and the District of Columbia, and we worked together with the EPA on how to clean up the bay. This is a treasured resource for Virginians. It is about as bipartisan a thing as there is in Virginia. Probably next to support for veterans, support for the Chesapeake Bay would be a close second in bipartisanship. As public officials, we worked out with the EPA a strategy we thought would be conducive to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay—which is not just about enjoyment, not just about water quality, but also about traditional Virginia industries, like watermen's industry tourism, which is a big industry in our State.

We worked it out to our satisfaction, but when we did, there was a lawsuit filed against this particular regulation by the Farm Bureau. The attorney general of Oklahoma—not one of the six States in the Chesapeake Bay watershed—the attorney general of Oklahoma intervened and filed a friend-of-the-court brief to try to strike down the regulation that the EPA and Virginia officials had worked on in tandem for the good of the Chesapeake Bay, for the good of our Commonwealth, for the good of our citizens.

I contend: Why would an attorney general in Oklahoma care so much about a Chesapeake Bay rule that we had worked out together? I contend that he and some other attorneys general who joined in this were worried that if the EPA succeeded, then the EPA might try something in other large watersheds, including those in their States.

The matter did go to the Federal appellate court. The Federal appellate court upheld the Chesapeake Bay plan. The attorneys general and others tried to take it to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court wouldn't take the appeal, and so the Chesapeake Bay plan is in operation. We were all struck about why an Oklahoma attorney general would be going after something affecting the Commonwealth of Virginia, and there is a point there.

The point was this. EPA scientists working in tandem with State officials had analyzed the water quality in the bay, and they had followed the State's progress, or lack thereof, over time, and they finally said, again, working in tandem with many of us: The pollution levels are so bad that we are never going to return the bay to what it can be unless we need to take action.

It was that scientific consensus that Mr. Pruitt as attorney general of Oklahoma was challenging. Science is the pursuit of truth. Science is supposed to follow where the facts lead, no matter what the scientist's initial views might be.

Mr. Pruitt's record does not tell me he will follow the data wherever it leads. It tells me that whenever there is a menu of options, he is going to take the option that is most beneficial to polluters rather than beneficial to public health.

I will conclude with the point at which I started. There is no Federal agency that needs to have somebody who accepts science and scientific consensus more than the EPA. It matters

deeply to Virginia, but I don't think Virginians are unique to this. I think it matters to the citizens of 50 States.

EPA regulations are not all wise, and some need to be dialed back. I have seen the positive effects of wise EPA regulations in my city and in my State. I am going to vote no on Mr. Pruitt because I don't believe his first duty will be to follow science and enforce just laws and regulations, appropriately governing the water we drink and the air we breathe.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise again to speak about the epidemic of gun violence in the city of Chicago and across America.

The American Medical Association has declared gun violence as a public health crisis in America. Every day, almost 300 men, women, and children are shot in this Nation. Gun violence touches every American community, but no community has suffered more than the city of Chicago.

I am honored to represent that city. I love it, and I think it is a great city. I spend a lot of time there to get to know the people who were born there and live their lives there and call it home. It is a great honor to call it part of my State that I am honored to represent.

The stories that are coming out of the city of Chicago are heartbreaking stories—and none worse than this week. This week there was a slaughter of the innocents. In a 4-day period earlier this week, three beautiful children under the age of 12 were fatally shot.

On Saturday night, 11-year-old Takiya Holmes, sitting in her mom's car, was shot in the head and killed. A 19-year-old suspect in custody has been charged. He reported that he was shooting from across the street at rival gang members, and a stray bullet hit Takiya. She died on Tuesday morning.

On Saturday, 12-year-old Kanari Gentry-Bowers was shot while playing basketball in the West Englewood neighborhood. She passed away just yesterday.

On Tuesday at 1:30 in the afternoon, 2-year-old Lavontay White was shot and killed while sitting in the car with his pregnant aunt and uncle. Lavontay's uncle was also killed. His aunt was wounded.

These shootings are senseless, devastating, and heartbreaking. Already this year there have been over 400 shootings in Chicago—so far this year. That is after there were more than 4,300 shootings last year.

My thoughts and prayers, of course, go to the victims and their families. I have attended so many marches and parades, funerals, and memorial services. But thoughts and prayers are not enough. We need to do something to reduce this epidemic of gun violence. There have been too many funerals, too many families who have lost that baby they loved, too many children who suffered the physical and mental trauma of gunshot wounds and witnessing violence. Many of these shootings could have been prevented, but it is going to take changes in our laws and changes in our attitude for that to happen.

We have absurd loopholes in our gun laws that make it easy for dangerous people to get their hands on guns. We have obvious gaps in our gun background check system. We have inadequate Federal laws to stop gun trafficking and straw purchases of guns. These factors allow a flood of illicit guns to come into Chicago from other towns and States, from gun shows in neighboring States where there is no background check. These drug gangs drive over to these locations and fill up the trunks of their cars with guns to take them and sell them in the neighborhoods to kids who shoot and kill one another day in and day out.

We have gun dealers—federally licensed gun dealers—who look the other way when someone comes in to make a straw purchase. That is the purchase of a gun that the purchaser is not going to use but is going to give it to somebody who is prohibited from buying a gun.

In light of the epidemic of gun violence in our country, Congress should be working around the clock to fix these gaps in our Federal law. But the Republican-controlled Senate is doing nothing to address gun violence in Chicago or anywhere else. Instead, look at what we just did yesterday. Just yesterday, this Senate, on this floor, voted to weaken the gun background check system instead of strengthening it. It is hard to understand how the Republican Party can have its priorities so wrong when it comes to gun violence.

We can respect Second Amendment rights of individuals. We can respect the rights of people to own a gun for self-defense, for sporting and hunting purposes. I have gone hunting. I have used a firearm. I complied with every law in the books, all of them. The hunters who were with me did too.

Why is it so hard to ask before we sell a gun to someone whether they have a criminal record, whether they are buying it for another person who might have a criminal record, or whether they have a history of mental instability, which would disqualify them from owning a gun?

We are facing a crisis in Chicago and across the Nation because of this violence. We in Congress have a responsibility to do everything we can at the Federal level to protect our constituents, our neighbors, from getting shot. We can't ignore this responsibility, and we certainly shouldn't be weakening gun laws as the Senate did yesterday.

We also need the Federal Government to be an engaged partner with cities like Chicago to help reduce violence and expand economic options in depressed neighborhoods. You can pick out three neighborhoods in the city of Chicago that account for almost 50 percent of gun violence—three neighborhoods. I visited some of them. They warned me: Don't get out of the car. They are right. Random gunfire is a reality of life in those neighborhoods. We know where they are. We know where the shooters live. We know where the victims are. We can do more.

President Trump sends out a lot of tweets. He likes to tweet about Chicago, and I am not quite sure why. Tweeting doesn't save lives. Saying that you are going to send in the Feds may be one of those short tweets that is catchy, but it doesn't mean a damned thing to the people who are being shot and are dying in the city of Chicago.

Last week I joined my colleague Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH, and we sent a letter to the President asking him to do more than tweet when it comes to Chicago.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this letter.

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

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, DC, February 10, 2017.

President DONALD J. TRUMP,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT TRUMP: During the 2016 presidential campaign and in numerous tweets and comments since the election, you have lamented the recent surge of gun violence in Chicago and said the federal government could help stop the violence. While the level of shootings and homicides is clearly unacceptable, tweeting alone will not fix it. Tweeting does not break cycles of violence; tweeting does not help lift people out of poverty; tweeting does not save lives. We urge you instead to provide a surge in federal support and resources for Chicago to reduce violence and expand economic opportunities for neglected communities.

Public safety is primarily a local responsibility, but the federal government must be an engaged partner in public safety efforts alongside local officials, law enforcement, and community stakeholders. There is much the federal government can do to help.

Instead of tweeting, you could begin by directing your Administration to enhance U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) programs that improve community policing, such as the COPS Hiring Program to help local police departments put more cops on the beat, and the Byrne-JAG grant program to enable local law enforcement to purchase or upgrade equipment. We note that in his first year in office, President Obama pushed for a surge in COPS and Byrne-JAG funding through the Recovery Act and the appropriations process that provided Chicago with $13.256 million in COPS Hiring funding and $35.637 million in Byrne-JAG finding. This is more than four times the amount of COPS funding and 15 times the amount of Byrne-JAG funding that the City received last year. You could push for a similar funding surge.

We also urge you to direct DOJ to promote mentoring and job training programs for youth and the formerly incarcerated. We are ready to work with you to strengthen the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to improve mentoring and violence prevention initiatives and to boost funding for recidivism reduction programs under the federal Second Chance Act. We urge you to direct DOJ to abide by its commitment to help implement policing reforms

recommended by the Department's Civil Rights Division. We also request your support for legislation to close gaps in the FBI gun background check system and in federal firearm laws that enable straw purchasers and gun traffickers to flood Chicago's streets with illicit guns.

Federal efforts must also transcend law enforcement and criminal justice programs to focus on causal factors, including the lack of economic opportunity. We urge the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor to prioritize important career and youth training programs that, if properly funded and expanded, would address the role that poverty plays in the violence epidemic facing Chicago and other communities around the country.

Before you send your next tweet, you could request a surge in additional federal resources for these public safety and economic development efforts in Chicago. But so far, your Administration has refused to commit to spend any additional resources to combat Chicago's violence and has actually threatened to cut federal funds for the City. Now is not the time for the federal government to abandon its support for Chicago and its people.

This week, you reportedly attributed Chicago's crime situation to the presence of undocumented immigrants. This coincides with your January 25 executive order that makes up to eight million immigrants priorities for deportation and seeks to create a mass deportation force by tripling the number of immigration agents. The vast majority of immigrants in our country are peaceful and have strong family values, and studies have shown that immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes than native-born individuals. We are aware of no evidence that undocumented immigrants are responsible for any significant proportion of the murders in Chicago, and claims otherwise do nothing but distract from efforts to meaningfully reduce the City's recent increase in violence.

We note that you have urged Congress to fund the construction of a wall on the Southern border that would reportedly cost at least $21.6 billion, even though the wall would not fix our broken immigration system and even though Republican Congressman Will Hurd, whose district covers 800 miles of the border, has said ''building a wall is the most expensive and least effective way to secure the border.'' If your Administration were to take even one percent of this funding and devote the resources instead to help Chicago's public safety efforts, it would make a dramatic difference in reducing Chicago's violence. We urge you to reprioritize federal resources that you would request for wall construction and commit those resources instead to reducing gun violence in Chicago and other violence-prevention efforts around the nation. Doing so could save many more lives than tweeting.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

RICHARD J. DURBIN,
U.S. Senator.
TAMMY DUCKWORTH,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. DURBIN. We asked the President to put his twitter account down for a few minutes and instead direct his Department of Justice to enhance programs that improve community policing, such as COPS and the Byrne-JAG grants. We asked him to provide a surge in these programs, just like President Obama did in his first year through the Recovery Act and the appropriations process.

We also asked the President to direct the Justice Department to promote mentoring and job training programs. I want peace on the streets of Chicago and every American city, and I know that one of the keys to this is the belief that there is a chance in this economy for you and your family.

We need to have mentoring and job training programs for young people through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and for former incarcerated persons through the Federal Second Chance Act.

We asked the President to support policing reforms recommended by the Justice Department in Washington. We asked him to support our efforts to close the gaps in Federal gun laws.

There is no denying that poverty plays a role in fueling violence and in violating justice. We asked the President, also, to prioritize funding for jobs programs under the Departments of Labor and Education. These are concrete steps that would help reduce violence in Chicago.

So far, President Trump's administration has not committed any additional resources to combatting Chicago's violence. Mayor Emanuel was here a few days ago to meet with the Department of Justice and to make the same plea. The administration instead is threatening to cut funding, on top of the devastating funding cuts we have already seen in Illinois under our current Governor.

Now is not the time for the Federal Government to abandon support for the families living in this great city. I urge the President and his administration to reprioritize Federal resources to reduce gun violence in Chicago and around the Nation. It is going to save a lot more lives than tweeting.

If you will not do it for two Democratic Senators, do it for these families. Do it for the moms and the relatives who are now planning the funeral services of these babies who were gunned down in the city of Chicago this week.

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. ROUNDS. 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. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise to discuss Mr. Trump's nominee to be Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt.

His background with the EPA regulatory process makes him well suited to lead this Agency. He has an in-depth understanding of the impact regulations have on landowners, American businesses and State and local governments. As attorney general, Mr. Pruitt has been a leader in standing up for the rights of State governments in the face of an aggressive EPA that has imposed increasingly costly and burdensome regulations on the States.

During his time as the attorney general, Mr. Pruitt established Oklahoma's first Federalism Unit in the Office of Solicitor General to more effectively combat unwarranted regulation and overreach by Federal agencies. General Pruitt is a strong believer in federalism and States' rights, which have been often overlooked by the previous administration, often to the detriment of the U.S. economy and our environment.

I am hopeful Attorney General Pruitt will take steps to improve the Federal regulatory process to make certain Federal regulations are promulgated with adequate public participation, underpinned by the best scientific evidence available and in a transparent and open manner. Attorney General Pruitt understands the importance of taking stakeholder, State, and local government comments and expertise into account when promulgating regulations. He understands that listening to and considering the differing viewpoints of stakeholders will improve the regulatory process and lead to better regulations. This will lead to fewer burdensome and costly regulations for South Dakota farmers, ranchers, and landowners, while at the same time making certain we have clean air and clean water.

The Obama EPA's process for considering scientific information was flawed and unbalanced. There was a lack of balanced opinion, geographic diversity in State, local, and tribal representation on EPA's Science Advisory Board, which is tasked with providing scientific advice to the EPA. Attorney General Pruitt understands the importance of relying on the most up-to-date science to underpin environmental regulations.

During his confirmation hearing, he affirmed to me that he would uphold his obligations to use the most current, accurate data and sound science when making decisions, especially when it comes to the renewable fuel standard. The RFS has been successful in South Dakota in encouraging investments and creating jobs in corn ethanol production. Mr. Pruitt understands the importance of corn ethanol to the Midwest.

Throughout his tenure as attorney general, Attorney General Pruitt witnessed firsthand the negative impact that EPA regulations, such as the waters of the United States rule, have on U.S. landowners and on our business owners. He saw how incomplete economic analysis did not account for the full impact of regulations on U.S. citizens, and the regulatory burden was often far greater than what the EPA claimed it would be.

The attorney general can modernize the EPA's approach to regulation and make certain that regulations are promulgated in a deliberate, fair, and

transparent process. A better regulatory process will lead to better regulations. Better regulations will make certain our air, water, and land is protected, our economy continues to grow, and American jobs can continue to be created.

Attorney General Pruitt has had a rigorous vetting process since first being nominated by President Trump. He has answered more than 1,200 questions from Senators, more than 1,000 more questions than nominees for the EPA Administrator from the incoming Obama administration to the Bush administration or the Clinton administration. Additionally, his confirmation hearing was the longest for any EPA Administrator.

I, personally, would like to thank Chairman BARRASSO for spearheading this fair and very transparent confirmation process. I would also like to thank Attorney General Pruitt for taking the time to answer all of the questions that were asked of him and meeting with Senators both on and off the EPW Committee.

General Pruitt's impressive background and depth of knowledge on EPA issues make him well suited to be the next EPA Administrator. As a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and chairman of the subcommittee which has oversight of the EPA, I look forward to his eventual confirmation and to working with him in the future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I recently read a story in the Wall Street Journal that I thought was so alarming it demanded action. Here is the headline: ''Marathon Pharmaceuticals to Charge $89,000 for Muscular Dystrophy Drug After 70-Fold Increase.''

Yes, that is $89,000 a year, and, yes, that is a 70-fold increase—70-fold, as in 7,000 percent.

For those of you who have not read the article, here is the story. There is a rare disease called Duchenne muscular dystrophy. It affects about 12,000 young men in the United States. Most of them, unfortunately, end up dying in their twenties and thirties because of it.

We don't have a cure yet for Duchenne. Until recently, there was not even a treatment with FDA approval. So, for many years, patients and parents have been importing a drug called deflazacort, a steroid, from other countries. Even though it is not a cure, it at least helps treat symptoms and has been a welcome relief to many families.

Well, technically it is illegal to import a drug that doesn't have FDA approval. But there is a catch. The FDA does not quite enforce the ban against all unapproved drugs. In fact, it has issued regulatory guidance saying that you can get an exemption and buy an unapproved drug from overseas if you meet five conditions. First, you have to have a serious illness for which there is no other treatment available. Second, you can't sell the drug. Third, you can't pose an unreasonable risk to your health. Fourth, it has to be for you and you alone. Fifth, you can't buy more than a 3-month supply.

All of that sounds fair enough. But if someone comes along and gets FDA approval for their version of the exact same drug, the exact same chemical composition of the drug that is being imported, then you cannot buy it overseas anymore. That is exactly what happened here.

This was not a new drug. This was not a medical breakthrough. This was not a scientific advance. This was, plain and simple, an arbitrage opportunity. Other people had already gone to the trouble of making a drug that worked, but if you paid the expenses of getting FDA approval, you would essentially buy for yourself monopoly pricing power. That is what other companies missed, and now, to cover the costs of going through that approval process, Marathon is increasing the price from roughly $1,500 a year to $89,000 a year.

I don't think it is an overstatement to say that this turn of events is nothing short of outrageous. It defeats the very purposes of our FDA laws. The reason we offer people the chance to create a monopoly is to encourage innovation and medical breakthroughs, to generate new drugs that are going to solve diseases or illnesses.

What we are saying is, if you go to the pain and expense of developing a new treatment, we will give you the sole rights to sell it for a number of years so you can recover your costs, and, therefore, we will encourage more medical breakthroughs to alleviate the pain and suffering of the American people. In other words, monopoly rights are not merit badges. They are not a reward for business smarts. They are supposed to serve the interests of patients. They are supposed to expand access to treatment. But in this case, what we see in our system is, in fact, restricting access and driving up the price for that coverage.

I understand that many people with Duchenne are happy that Marathon has done this because now that the drug has FDA approval, insurance companies will likely cover it—unlike before when people had to pay out of pocket, meaning that poor kids didn't get access to deflazacort, whereas upper middle-class and rich kids typically did.

I also know that Marathon has promised to increase spending on research on a new drug and to help people of limited means afford that treatment. That, too, is all to the good.

I am not casting aspersions on anyone's motives here, but let's be real. Someone has to pay the full price of this drug at $89,000 a year. We have a drug that used to be available for $1,500 a year, and now it is $89,000 a year. Whatever happened, that is a systemwide failure. We as a Congress have to address it.

There is simply no getting around the fact that this story should never have been written in the first place because it should have never happened in the first place. We should be channeling peoples' ambition and entrepreneurial spirit into finding cures, not finding new and clever ways to make a profit. That is what our food and drug laws are designed to do. That is what they have clearly failed to do in this instance.

I just want to say that I am not going to let this story disappear. I am going to work with my colleagues to find a legislative solution to this mess and promote affordable, high-quality healthcare for all, for all families whose young children suffer from Duchenne and for every other orphan disease that has drugs that can be used for treatment and right now are being blocked from the market or for which we are paying way too much money as a society.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. 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. CANTWELL. Mr. President, for the last 47 years, the EPA has enforced science-based environmental policies that have resulted in cleaner air and water, the cleanup of some of our Nation's most contaminated lands and waters, and has improved our understanding of our changing climate. All of this has led to a healthier America.

Bipartisan Administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency—everybody from the great Washingtonian Bill Ruckelshaus to most recently Gina McCarthy—took on the role and responsibility as EPA Administrator, knowing that it was their responsibility to protect existing environmental law and to let science be the guide on research and new policies. They took the EPA mission to heart, and they fought to protect human health and the environment.

I have questions about whether the nominee, Mr. Pruitt, follows those same values, and I come to the floor to oppose his nomination to be the Administrator of the EPA.

Mr. Pruitt has repeatedly attacked needed EPA regulations, and he supports polluters at the expense of the environment and health laws. He doesn't believe the scientifically proven causes of climate change are real.

Less than a year ago, then-Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt, working in their State, wrote: ''Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind.'' That was written in the Tulsa World.

When questioned by my colleagues during the hearing process, he said: ''The climate is changing, and human activity contributes to that in some manner'' but the degree of that contribution is ''subject to more debate.''

The reason I raised these issues is that this issue of climate and climate impact is so real in the State of Washington. It is already happening, and it is already affecting our industries.

As EPA Administrator, Mr. Pruitt would have the responsibility for setting the Agency's agenda, including how to respond to climate change, yet the fact that he doesn't support the existing climate change science puts him in a role where I think he would not protect the economic interests of our State.

We cannot have a lackadaisical attitude about these issues. It is not a hypothesis. It is here. It is happening.

In the Pacific Northwest, it is altering our region's water cycle, putting Washington's farming jobs and our $51 billion agriculture economy at risk. Wildfire seasons are longer and more severe than ever before. It is costing our Nation billions of dollars.

Warmer water temperatures in our streams and rivers have degraded salmon spawning habitat, led to massive die-offs, and certainly our shellfish industry has been very challenged.

With 25 percent of carbon dioxide emissions being absorbed by our oceans, it is raising the acidity level, and that is impacting the chemistry of Puget Sound. Oceans and their absorption of carbon dioxide emissions and these acidic conditions are making it hard for our shellfish industry to do the type of seeding that needs to take place. It is severely impacting the Pacific Northwest's $278 million shellfish industry. Ocean acidification has been found to dissolve the shells of important prey species, and the ocean acidification effects then carry up the food chain, if they are not addressed.

If we have an EPA Administrator who isn't going to work to cut down on carbon emissions and thinks that it is only part of the impact, aren't there a lot of Northwest jobs at stake? For example, our maritime economy alone is worth $30 billion, so I would say there is a lot at stake.

In looking at the record of Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt, he fought EPA regulations that protect public health, including the cross-state air pollution rule, the regional haze rule, the clean air standards for oil and gas production sites, and the clean water rule.

Despite this issue of repeatedly suing the EPA, he recently told Congress: ''I do not expect any previous lawsuits to adversely affect my performance as EPA Administrator.''

Well, I have serious concerns about how Mr. Pruitt's past lawsuits will influence his aggressive attitude as EPA Administrator in not fighting for the things that are going to protect the jobs and economy in Washington State that count so much on a pristine environment.

A letter was sent by 773 former EPA employees who served under Democratic and Republican administrations, stating: ''Mr. Pruitt's record and public statements strongly suggest that he does not share the vision or agree with the underlying principles of our environmental statutes.''

His record does not give me the confidence that he is the right person to lead this Agency at this point in time.

But there are other issues. During his time as Oklahoma attorney general, Scott Pruitt planned the Summit on Federalism and the Future of Fossil Fuels. This summit brought together energy industry executives with attorneys general to strategize against EPA, and they specifically discussed EPA's overreach, as they put it, regarding a very important issue called the Pebble Mine.

The Pebble Mine is an attempt by some who want to actually establish a gold mine in the very place of one of the most successful salmon habitats in the entire world: Bristol Bay, AK.

The EPA followed the letter of the law in their multiyear, science-based assessment of Bristol Bay. They basically made sure that everybody understood what was at risk: that Pebble Mine would destroy up to 94 miles of salmon spawning streams; it would devastate anywhere from 1,300 to 5,350 acres of wetlands; and it would create 10 billion tons of toxic mine waste, which is nearly enough to bury Seattle. And all of this would occur in the headwaters of the greatest salmon fishery on Earth, where half of the sockeye salmon on the planet spawn.

So the notion that this is how this nominee would spend his time—as I said, the mine itself is a direct threat to the $1.5 billion salmon industry in Bristol Bay. That is 14,000 jobs just in the Pacific Northwest. The importance of making sure that the mine is not located there is of the utmost importance, I say, to the salmon fisheries of the entire Pacific Northwest.

I want to make sure we are putting someone in place who is going to fight for the laws that are on the books and to show leadership, not spend time trying to undermine the Agency, the organization, and its existing authority.

If Scott Pruitt allowed Bristol Bay to go forward, it would be devastating to our State. It would be voting in favor of these polluters instead of making sure that we are protecting science and environmental law.

I have very serious concerns, and that is why I am opposing this nominee. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will realize that these economies—the ones that depend on clean air and clean water, safe salmon spawning grounds—are dependent on our doing the right thing to protect what is really our stewardship of this planet that we are on only for a very short period of time. I hope my colleagues will consider all of this and oppose this nominee.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to speak about this nomination from the standpoint of our State, our State of Florida, because we are famous for sugar-white beaches, fertile fishing grounds, and unique environmental treasures, such as the Florida Everglades. These precious natural resources need our protection and our stewardship. In fact, Florida's multibillion-dollar tourism industry is driven by the fact that people come to our State to enjoy these kinds of environmental treasures.

I have just come from a meeting with the American Hotel & Lodging Association. With multibillions of dollars of investments all over Florida, what happens if the guests don't come? That is a major investment that is lost.

And, oh, by the way, a few years ago during the BP oil spill—when the oil got only as far east from Louisiana as Pensacola Beach, and some oil was in Choctawhatchee Bay and Destin and some tar balls were as far east as Panama City Beach, but not any further—the visitors didn't come because they thought the beaches were covered with oil.

Well, right now Florida's unique environment is threatened by several environmental challenges, from the threat of fracking in this honeycomb of limestone filled with freshwater that supports the peninsula of Florida to algal blooms that have plagued much of Florida's Treasure Coast this last year, to the red tide in the Tampa Bay area, and to Burmese pythons in the Everglades. And that is just a little bitty partialness of the plagues. To deal with these challenges, States such as ours depend on the EPA as a backstop.

I am here to express my concerns about the President's pick to lead this agency. It has been well documented that the President's pick is a friend of the oil industry. There is nothing wrong with that. But this is an industry that has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in political contributions to Mr. Pruitt and the PACs supporting him over the years.

Ever since I was a young Congressman, I have been fighting to keep oil rigs off the coast of Florida. In the first place, there is not a lot of oil out there, but Florida's unique environment—from what I just told you about, the BP oil spill—its tourism-driven economy, and, oh, by the way, the largest testing and training area for the U.S. military in the world, the Gulf of Mexico off of Florida, as well as all of the testing ranges on the east coast, and how about the rockets coming out of the

Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and the rockets coming out of the Kennedy Space Center—because of all of those, you can't have oil rigs down there. For all of those reasons, it makes Florida incompatible with offshore oil drilling. An EPA Administrator with such close ties to the oil industry is deeply concerning for the people of Florida.

But Mr. Pruitt's ties to Big Oil aren't the only concern that we have in Florida. During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Pruitt said that he believes that his views on climate change are ''immaterial'' to the job of the EPA Administrator.

Whoa, the EPA Administrator is directly involved in things that involve climate change. I can't think of a more relevant issue for our EPA Administrator to be concerned with because Florida is ground zero when it comes to the effects of sea level rise.

These are not projections, not forecasts. These are measurements over the last 40 years in South Florida. The sea has risen 5 to 8 inches.

By the way, where is three-quarters of the population of Florida? It is along the coast. We are already seeing regular flooding at the mean high tide in the streets of Miami Beach, and they are spending millions on infrastructure in order to get those pumps working to get the water off the streets and raising the level of the streets.

We are seeing the saltwater, which is heavier than freshwater, seep into the ground where there is a honeycomb of limestone filled with freshwater, and the seawater is seeping into the freshwater. So cities are having to move their city well fields further to the west because of the saltwater intrusion, and it only gets worse.

The threat Floridians face every day is a result of this sea level rise that is very real. It is critical that we have an EPA Administrator that understands that there are things that are happening because of climate change. It is not immaterial to the job of the EPA Administrator; it is very relevant.

There is Mr. Pruitt's history of questioning science, especially when the facts conflict with his friends, whom he surrounds himself with, about the effects of science. So whether it is protecting Florida's livestock from deadly parasites or protecting the air we breathe, science informs policy decisions that affect all of us—clean water, clean air. It affects public health, national security, and the environment.

Yet we continue to see troubling reports about scientists being muzzled from the State level all the way up to the Federal level in the EPA. So it just seems that this is unacceptable. Our scientists should be free to publish scientific data and not be muzzled. They should be able to publish their reports without fear of losing their jobs or being censored for using phrases like ''climate change.''

That is why I recently sponsored legislation to protect our scientists from political interference. The Scientific Integrity Act would ensure that Federal scientists can communicate their findings with the public. It requires Federal agencies to implement and enforce scientific integrity policies and ensure that procedures are in place so that if those policies are violated, it is known and there is a procedure to deal with that.

I conclude by stating that Floridians and the State of Florida cannot risk the health of our environment or our economy on an EPA Administrator who pals around with folks that do all of what I am talking about—they question our scientists, denying the true threat we face from sea level rise and climate change. Floridians can't afford such a risk, and they shouldn't be forced to take this risk. Therefore, I will vote no on Mr. Pruitt's nomination to be EPA Administrator.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my postcloture debate time to Senator CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mr. NELSON. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I join my colleagues today to recognize that the environment is critically important. One of the true issues States face is getting back to the promises of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act to make sure States enjoy primacy, and I think that is a critical component that is not being discussed today as we look at guaranteed clean water and clean air—making sure that those closest to those issues have the ability to have the input that was anticipated by almost every environmental statute. So I would remind my colleagues that when we focus many times on Federal issues and Federal appointments, one of the most important things that we can do is focus on the fact that these Federal agency heads need to work cooperatively with State organizations.

Scott Pruitt, who is a soon-to-be former attorney general, understands the State role, and I think that is a critical qualification and an important distinction to make.

EX-IM BANK

But I didn't come to talk about the appointment of Scott Pruitt. I came to talk about something we could all agree on, and in fact the President and I agree on this, and I think everyone agrees on this almost unanimously, which is that American jobs matter. Putting Americans back to work in manufacturing is one of the most critical things that we can do in the Senate, making sure that our people have an opportunity to succeed, participate, and have an opportunity to produce goods and services that can be exported and can grow the wealth of our country and grow the economy of our country.

Last week I joined President Trump in a small bipartisan lunch. We had a chance to talk about a variety of issues. There are very many issues that divide us, but this issue unites us. I specifically talked with the President about the need to get the Export-Import Bank up and running. I also talked to him about the Export-Import Bank in December and talked about the importance of enabling this institution to function for the American manufacturing worker. The great news is that President Trump agrees, and he informed me that we can in fact say he supports the Ex-Im Bank and that he would be nominating someone soon to serve on the Export-Import Bank.

That led off a rash of discussion among the usual naysayers with the Ex-Im Bank, mostly driven by ideology and not fact. So I think it is important to come once again to reiterate the importance of the Ex-Im Bank.

I certainly appreciate the President's interest in making American workers a priority. He will be at Boeing in South Carolina on Friday. I don't know if he will make any announcement about nominating someone to the Ex-Im Bank. I hope he does.

There has been a lot of talk about supporting the economy and boosting American manufacturing jobs, but all that talk falls on deaf ears if we don't take action on the simple issues when we can accomplish those goals, and that simple issue is enabling the Export-Import Bank to function. For decades the Export-Import Bank has leveled the playing field for American workers and businesses. Yet heavy politics is enabling one Senator to put political ideology before the jobs and well-being of thousands of American workers across our country.

We worked very, very hard in 2015. We knew that we were going to be challenged to get the Ex-Im Bank reauthorized. In June of 2015, the Export-Import Bank expired and did not have a charter. It was not authorized for the first time in its more than 80-year history. I fought very hard to reauthorize it, as did a number of my colleagues. Finally, in December 2016, 6 months later, the Bank was given a charter, given an authorization. I want to point out something because I think way too often we think what stops this endeavor is partisan politics. Guess what. Over 70 percent of the House of Representatives voted for the Ex-Im Bank and over 60 percent of the Senate voted for the Ex-Im Bank. This is not a partisan issue. There is bipartisan support. Yet there is a narrow group of people who would rather put ideology ahead of American jobs. It is wrong on so many levels.

Despite the fact, unfortunately, that we finally authorized the Ex-Im Bank over a year ago with overwhelming support, we do not have a Bank that can authorize any credits over $10 million. That is because it requires a quorum of Bank board members to make that decision. We only have two out of the five members of the board. That means that we don't have a quorum. So what has been happening is that there is $30 billion—think about that, $30 billion—of American exports waiting in the queue, waiting for approval, hoping desperately to get the

Ex-Im Bank up and running so those exports can receive the credit they need and receive the guarantees that those exports need and get people back to work.

Do you know what else has been happening since we haven't had a quorum on the Bank? Thousands of American jobs have been transported to places like France and Canada. We are losing thousands of jobs.

When I hear people say the Ex-Im Bank is the bank of Boeing or the bank of GE, trust me, I do not bleed for the executives of Boeing. I do not bleed for the executives of GE. They will do fine. In fact, they know how to get around this problem. They just move those manufacturing jobs to a country that will recognize the exports and will provide that export credit. That is what is happening. But guess what is happening to the American worker and families across these manufacturing facilities? They are getting pink slips. Why? Because this body refuses to give us a quorum on the Ex-Im Bank.

The President understands this. The President understands how important it is to get these American workers back together. Now I want you just to think about what $30 billion of exports is worth to American employment. If we use the numbers that extrapolate, it is hard to know, but it is over 170,000 jobs. Think about the fact that 170,000 jobs are waiting in the wings for us to do the right thing. When we move forward with the Ex-Im Bank, I think we will have a good day—a good bipartisan day when the President of the United States joins with those of us who care about workers and manufacturing in this country—and we will get the Ex-Im Bank up and running. I think if we fail to do it and if we fail to send the signals that help is coming and that the Ex-Im Bank is going to be an effective institution that will once again play a role in American manufacturing and will be in that tool chest of trade opportunities—if we don't do it—then they are going to give up all hope, and they are going to find some other place to manufacture the products that will allow them to access the credit, that will allow them to sell their products overseas. So it is critically important.

I want to leave with one statistic. The Peterson Institute recently estimated that the United States is losing $50 million in exports for every day that a nomination is not confirmed—$50 million of new wealth creation for our country. It is a travesty.

Of all of the things I have seen here—the callous things—that sound so bureaucratic when you talk about the Ex-Im Bank, when you pick up the curtain and you look underneath, what we see are American jobs and American families and American opportunity and new wealth creation for our country and economic growth for our country. And because some institution that could give you a black mark in a political campaign says ''We don't like it,'' it doesn't get done. Shame on us.

Thank you to the President for agreeing to help us move the Ex-Im Bank forward. Thank you to all of my colleagues—64 in the last Congress—who stood with us to get the Ex-Im Bank reauthorized and the over 70 percent of the House of Representatives, on a stand-alone vote, who voted for the Ex-Im Bank, who know how critically important this is. We can get this job done, and we can stop the migration of these jobs to other countries.

I look forward to hearing more this week and hopefully early next week from the President. As a member of the Banking Committee, I look forward to pushing for a hearing and a vote on this nominee. And I look forward to the day that all of these exporters and these American workers can see that this institution can work for them, and that will be the day that those credits are approved at the Ex-Im Bank.

Thank you so much, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is postcloture on the Pruitt nomination.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise in support of the nomination of Scott Pruitt.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, will my friend from Mississippi yield the floor for one moment?

Mr. WICKER. I am delighted to yield.

Ms. HEITKAMP. I thank the Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my postcloture debate time to Senator CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I am delighted to rise this afternoon in support of Scott Pruitt, nominated for EPA Administrator, and to congratulate the leadership of this Senate and the administration for persevering on this nomination to the point where we will get a vote tomorrow afternoon and I think be able to end the week on a positive note.

My good friend, the Senator from North Dakota, had just called for a good bipartisan day on the Senate floor, and I support many of the remarks she made in that regard. I would hope we could begin having some good bipartisan days with regard to the administration's nominations for these important positions.

Sadly, it looks as though we will not have a bipartisan vote for Scott Pruitt. He will be confirmed but not nearly with the vote he should receive from Members on both sides of the aisle who know that there has been extreme overreach on the part of the EPA leadership under the Obama administration. The EPA needs a change in direction, and they need to become more sensible with regard to stopping pollution, while at the same time being friendly on job creation. So we will get this nomination finished tomorrow and we will have a good Administrator, but regrettably it will not be on a very bipartisan basis.

This is the Scott Pruitt whom I have had a chance to learn about since he was nominated in January.

The Scott Pruitt I have had a chance to learn about took on the polluters as attorney general for his State of Oklahoma and finalized multistate agreements to limit pollution, and he did so working with Democrats and working with Republicans on a bipartisan basis across the political spectrum. I think we need that sort of person as EPA Administrator. Scott Pruitt negotiated a water rights settlement with the tribes to preserve scenic lakes and rivers, and I think he is to be congratulated on that, not scolded. He stood up to oil companies and gas companies as attorney general for the State of Oklahoma and challenged them when they were polluting his State's air and water. Then—something I applaud—when the EPA overstepped its bounds and its mission and ceased to follow the law, he challenged the EPA. I submit to my colleagues that that is exactly the sort of balance we need to return to as Administrator of the EPA.

In the hearing, which was rather extraordinary because of its length, Attorney General Pruitt demonstrated his knowledge, he demonstrated his intellect, and he demonstrated his patience. He was available all day long—an extraordinarily long hearing—answered more than 200 questions propounded at the hearing, and then beyond that he has now answered more than 1,000 questions for the record. Yet, in spite of this, it is disappointing that some of my colleagues, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, have taken not only to disparaging his qualifications and his suitability for this position but also engaged in a slow-walking process designed to keep this nomination from even coming forward.

Every Democrat boycotted the committee meeting that was called to report this nomination to the floor so that we could even have an up-or-down vote. They walked out of the meeting. This is the sort of tactic we were able to overcome on a parliamentary basis, but it has given us what we now know is the slowest confirmation process in 225 years. The only President to have a slower confirmation process was the one who was getting it all kicked off to start with; George Washington's was a bit slower. We will see. Maybe if this keeps going, we could surpass the slowness of the confirmation process that occurred for our first President.

We need a change at EPA. The American people are ready for a change at EPA. We need an EPA Administrator who will listen to the environmentalists but also listen to the job creators. This means listening to the election but moving past the election and getting on to filling the positions that are

important to Americans, such as the EPA Administrator.

Most Americans believe we can protect the environment and still protect job creators, and so does Attorney General Scott Pruitt. Most Americans believe we can have clean air and water without destroying thousands upon thousands of jobs for Americans. That is what I believe. That is what Scott Pruitt believes.

I would quote from a recent op-ed in the Wall Street Journal which William McGurn wrote in support of Mr. Pruitt but also generally in support of other nominations. With regard to Pruitt, Mr. McGurn says this: ''The fierce opposition to Mr. Pruitt speaks to the progressive fear that he might help restore not only science to its rightful place but also federalism.'' I think that is what Scott Pruitt is going to be about when he is confirmed tomorrow and finally gets down to working for us, the taxpayers, as Administrator of EPA.

This is about the 1-month mark in this administration, and we are slowly getting past this unprecedented slow-walk effort by our colleagues. I certainly hope that with the 1,100 other appointments that have to be submitted and have to be spoken to by this Senate, we can hasten the process so we can pass legislation and be about the business our constituents sent us here to do.

Approving Attorney General Scott Pruitt will allow us to move forward with the people's business with a man who has demonstrated courtesy, intelligence, patience, and professionalism, and I will be honored to be one of those voting yes tomorrow when we confirm this outstanding candidate as EPA Administrator.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARPER. 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. CARPER. Mr. President, I would like to follow up on something our friend from Mississippi was just saying. I want to make it clear that I am not really interested in obstructing. I am not interested at all in obstructing. What I am interested in is getting to the truth about this nominee and others.

Two years ago, an organization called the Center for Media and Democracy petitioned, under the Oklahoma open records law—it is a FOIA-like law at the State level—they asked for access to thousands of emails that were sent from or to the attorney general's office under Scott Pruitt. That was 2 years ago. They have repeatedly renewed that request over time, and it has not been granted.

Why might emails be germane? Well, they are germane because many of the emails were with industries that have differences with the EPA and in some cases are involved in lawsuits, a number of which were sponsored by or joined in by Attorney General Pruitt.

Two years after the request to see those emails was submitted to the attorney general's office, they had not seen one of them. A lawsuit was filed earlier this month asking the court—I think it is called the district court of Oklahoma, a State court—asking to see the emails and asking that the court intervene so that the Center for Media and Democracy would have access to the emails.

The Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee wrote to the judge, and we shared our voice because we have been making the same request of the attorney general's office—of the attorney general—as part of the nominations process. He has declined to provide the emails to the Congress, the Senate, and we have let the judge know that we appreciate her attention to this matter and hope she might even expedite it. Well, an expedited hearing is called for this afternoon on the sharing of these emails that have been blocked, stonewalled, for 2 years.

What we did as Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee is I met with the majority leader, and nine of us wrote to the majority leader, and we said: With all due respect, we suggest to give the judge time to make a decision, and if the judge says the emails should be opened up, allow us to have until a week from this coming Monday to look at the emails to see if there is anything inappropriate or untoward that could be revealed.

That request to the majority leader—he was very nice about it, but he basically said: We are not going to do that.

I renewed the request here yesterday on the floor, and he said: No, we are not going to do that.

I am generally one who thinks it is very important for us to communicate, collaborate, cooperate around here, as I think most of my colleagues would attest, but in this case, I don't think we made an unreasonable request of the nominee. And I think to block access to these emails—even when petitioned under the Oklahoma FOIA law, backed up by our support—for nothing to happen is just wrong. That is just wrong.

So hopefully when the judge has this hearing later this afternoon—actually, in 2 hours—we will find out a bit more as to whether the AG's office is going to be asked to turn these emails over and make them public with that information. I hope the answer will be yes. We will see.

I asked Mr. Pruitt 52 questions on December 28 and asked they be responded to by January 9. January 9 came and went, and we were told maybe we would get the responses at the hearing we were going to have on January 18. We had the hearing on January 18, and some of the specific questions were answered, some not, but we submitted as a committee some 1,000 additional questions for the record. That is a lot of questions. I suggested to the committee chairman he give the nominee a reasonable amount of time to respond to those questions. The chairman, in the interest of moving things along, I think, gave the nominee 2 days, which is, in my view, not nearly enough.

If we go back several years ago, the last EPA Administrator was a woman named Gina McCarthy. She was asked a number of questions. She was actually asked more questions, I think 1,400 questions, which is several hundred more than Scott Pruitt but a lot of questions. She did not have enough time to answer the questions, and a little extra time, maybe a week or so, was granted. She answered the questions, as I understand, fully, completely, and directly. I will read some of the questions we asked of Scott Pruitt later today, later tonight, with examples of the kind of answers he provided. Some were reasonably complete, but too many were evasive, indirect, or just nonresponsive. Maybe that is because the chairman only gave him a couple days to respond. That is not the way we ought to be about the business.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I came to the floor today to oppose the nomination of Scott Pruitt to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. I thank my colleague from Delaware, whom I had the honor to serve with when we were both Governors, for his good work to point out why Scott Pruitt is the wrong person to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA was created by a Republican President in 1970, Richard Nixon. I remember very clearly when he did that. Across subsequent decades, support for this Agency and for its important mission has been a strongly bipartisan endeavor. Our Nation has benefited from the service of dedicated, highly effective EPA Administrators from both parties, but I am deeply concerned that Scott Pruitt is a radical break from this bipartisan tradition.

After reviewing Mr. Pruitt's environmental record, I have to ask: Why was he nominated for this critically important position? He rejects the core missions of the Environmental Protection Agency at every turn. He has sued the EPA to block protections for clean air and clean water; he is an outspoken climate change denier; he seeks to dismantle the EPA's Clean Power Plan, which was put in place to address climate change; and he opposes other efforts to slow the warming of this planet. Time and again, he has put private interests and their profits ahead of public interests and public health.

As attorney general of Oklahoma, he has sided with oil and gas companies, and he has failed to protect the people of his State from some of the worst impacts of hydraulic fracturing. He has taken hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from fossil fuel industries, and he zealously advocated for their freedom to pollute our air and water.

So again I ask: Why was Scott Pruitt nominated to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency? Well, I think it is clear Mr. Pruitt was nominated not to lead the EPA forward but to prevent it from carrying out its mission. Make no mistake, Mr. Pruitt and his extreme agenda are a threat to the environment, to the planet, and to our public health.

Christine Todd Whitman, a former Republican Governor of New Jersey and whom I also had the honor of serving with when I was Governor—Senator CARPER, Christie Whitman, and I all served as Governors together. She also was EPA Administrator during George W. Bush's administration. What she said about Pruitt I think is worth listening to. This is a Republican talking about Scott Pruitt: ''I don't recall ever having seen an appointment of someone who is so disdainful of the agency and the science behind what the agency does.''

People in the State of New Hampshire have no doubt about the reality of climate change. In the Granite State we see it. We experience it all the time. The steady increase in yearly temperatures and the rise in annual precipitation are already affecting New Hampshire's tourism and our outdoor recreation economy, which accounts for more than $4 billion a year and employs over 50,000 people. Each year, hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and wildlife watchers come to New Hampshire to enjoy our beautiful mountains, our lakes, our other natural resources, and our 18 miles of coastline, which we are very proud of. As I said, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation contribute more than $4 billion to New Hampshire's economy each year, but much of this is now threatened by the warming of our planet. Rising temperatures are shortening our fall foliage season, they are negatively affecting our snow- and ice-related winter recreation activities, including skiing, snowboarding, and snowmobiling. An estimated 17,000 Granite Staters are directly employed by the ski industry in New Hampshire, and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services warns that those jobs are threatened by climate change.

Likewise, New Hampshire's and indeed all of New England's brilliant fall foliage is at risk. I wish to quote from a report by New Hampshire Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions. They say: ''Current modeling forecasts predict that maple sugar trees eventually will be completely eliminated as a regionally important species in the northeastern United States.''

Climate modeling by the Union of Concerned Scientists projects that by the end of this century, New Hampshire summers will feel like present-day summers in North Carolina, 700 miles to our south. We have a map that shows what is going to happen to our red maples and the maple sugaring industry. We can see everything here that is in red, these are all those sugar maples. It is projected that by 2070 or 2100, they are gone. They are gone from New England, from the Northeast, and from most of the Eastern part of this country. If we fail to act on climate change, this could mean a steep loss of jobs. It could mean a loss of revenue. It will destroy our maple sugaring industry and will damage our outdoor recreation industry.

Maple sugar production is entirely dependent on weather conditions, and changes—no matter how modest—can throw off production and endanger this industry. Maple trees require warm days and freezing nights to create the optimal sugar content in sap production. The changing climate is putting more and more stress on sugar maples. As this map shows so well, it is already significantly affecting syrup production. If we fail to act on climate change, this could destroy our maple syrup industry. If you haven't done maple sugaring in the springtime, there is nothing like maple syrup over snow. There is nothing else like it. To lose that and to lose the jobs that are there is a real change to one of the recreational activities we love in New Hampshire.

Climate change is also threatening our wildlife species and their habitats. The moose is an iconic feature of New Hampshire's culture and identity, but as the results of climate change, we have seen a 40-percent decline in New Hampshire's moose population. We can see clearly from these pictures why we are losing our moose: Because of milder winters, ticks don't die off. It is really very tragic. The ticks multiply on a moose, they ravage it, and they eventually kill it. I don't know if people can see, but what look like little balls on the end of that moose's tail are ticks. This moose probably has brain worm, which is another problem the moose have because of winters that aren't cold enough to kill off those parasites. Ticks multiply on a moose, they ravage it, and they eventually kill it.

We have seen modeling from the University of New Hampshire which suggests that by 2030, moose will be gone—not only from northern New Hampshire but from much of the northern part of this country.

Other newly invasive insects are harming wildlife species as well as trees. Of course, people are also suffering from the impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures increase the number of air pollution action days. They increase pollen and mold levels, outdoors as well as allergen levels inside, and all of these things are dangerous to sensitive populations with asthma, allergies, and chronic respiratory conditions. In fact, New Hampshire has one of the highest rates of childhood asthma in the country because we are the tailpipe. All of New England is the tailpipe for the rest of the country. Pollution blows across this country from the Midwest and exits through New Hampshire and New England.

Rising temperatures facilitate the spread of insect-borne illnesses such as Lyme disease. We could see on that moose what the impact is. Those ticks aren't just multiplying on the moose, they are multiplying in a way that affects people as well.

Fortunately, because we have seen the impact of climate change, New Hampshire and the other New England States are taking the lead in reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to a more energy-efficient, clean energy economy. We are one of nine Northeastern States participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative called RGGI. It is essentially a cap-and-trade system in the Northeast. New Hampshire has already reduced its power sector carbon pollution by 49 percent since 2008. That is a 49-percent reduction in less than a decade. Thanks to efforts by State and local communities, New Hampshire is on track to meet the Clean Power Plan's carbon reduction goals 10 years early. In addition, we are using proceeds from emissions permits sold at RGGI auctions to finance clean energy and energy efficiency investments.

Unfortunately, Scott Pruitt seems to believe that reducing pollution and investing in a clean environment are somehow bad for the economy. He is just wrong about that. Our efforts in New Hampshire and across New England to fight climate change and promote clean energy have been a major boost to economic growth. We have seen jobs added as a result. During its first 3 years, RGGI produced $1.6 billion in net economic value and created more than 16,000 jobs in our region. Nationwide, employment in the fossil fuel sector is falling dramatically, but job creation in the clean energy and energy efficiency sectors is exploding. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, more than 2 million jobs have been created in the energy efficiency sector alone and—if we can ever get Congress to move the energy efficiency legislation Senator PORTMAN and I have introduced—would create, by 2030, another 200,000 jobs, just on energy efficiency. Across New England, we are demonstrating that smart energy choices can benefit the environment and strengthen job creation and the economy overall.

So, again, we have to ask: Why does Scott Pruitt deny the science of climate change? Why has he urged States to refuse to comply with the Clean Power Plan? Why has he filed lawsuit after lawsuit to block enforcement of the Clean Air Act? Why does he deny

something as nearly universally recognized as the dangers of mercury pollution?

The bottom line, I believe, is that Scott Pruitt is first and foremost a fierce defender of the oil and gas industry. If scientists point to carbon emissions as the main cause of climate change, then he has to deny that science. If science and common sense point to hydraulic fracking as the cause of thousands of earthquakes in the State of Oklahoma, then he must deny that too. If the EPA's mission is to protect clean air and clean water from pollution caused by fossil fuels, then he has to sue the EPA and try to cripple it.

Scott Pruitt's nomination is not about shaking things up in Washington. It is about turning over control of the EPA to the fossil fuel industry and turning back the clock on half a century of bipartisan efforts—in Democratic and Republican administrations alike—to protect clean air and clean water and to pass on to our children a livable environment and an Earth that they can inhabit from future generations.

My office has been flooded with calls, emails, and letters from Granite Staters. They not only oppose Mr. Pruitt's nomination, they are genuinely afraid of the consequences of putting him in charge of the EPA.

I heard from Deb Smith from Hampton, NH. That is a small community on our coastline. She wrote:

> I am a birder, love to walk on the beach and in the mountains, and rely on time spent in nature to cope with a [stage four] lung cancer diagnosis. Clean air is especially important to me! Pruitt's long history of suing the EPA and reversing decades of progress in improving the environment disqualifies him for this post. It is essential to continue to preserve and improve our natural environment for people, birds, and other wildlife!

Elizabeth Garlo of Concord writes:

> New Hampshire, due to quirks in its geology and the Earth's rotation, is the ''tailpipe'' of the Nation with much of the air pollutants from the Midwest exiting to the ocean from here. The people of New Hampshire cannot sit back and watch our children suffer from asthma and be restricted from outside activities due to ''bad air quality days.'' Mr. Pruitt will be a very significant detriment to the quality of life in New Hampshire.

Eugene Harrington of Nashua writes:

> I am AGAINST the appointment of Scott Pruitt to head the EPA. He does not seem to support the purpose of the EPA. Now I hear that even scientific papers are being reviewed to be sure they support the current administration's view of ''facts.'' Please do what you can to support a functioning EPA.

Christopher Morgan of Amherst, NH, writes:

> This is my first message I have ever sent to my senator in my 32 years as a voting American. . . . As a registered Republican . . . I am vehemently opposed to Mr. Pruitt leading the EPA. He has consistently shown he does not believe in the threat posed by climate change. Climate change affects every citizen in this country and has a detrimental effect on the New Hampshire climate specifically. President Trump's willful disregard for the safety and protection of all Americans cannot go unchecked.

Let me emphasize that I have heard from many Republican constituents who oppose Scott Pruitt's confirmation. My Republican friends point with pride to the fact that the EPA was created by a Republican President. After all, what could be more conservative than conserving our environment and preserving a livable Earth for future generations? For nearly half a century, protecting the environment has been a bipartisan priority and endeavor. That is especially true in the State of New Hampshire, where folks understand that clean air and water and fighting climate change are not and should not be partisan issues. We all have a profound stake in protecting the environment.

Unfortunately, with the nomination of Scott Pruitt to head the EPA, the Trump administration is willing to shatter this bipartisan tradition and consensus, and we must not allow this to happen. I appeal to all of my colleagues but especially to all of those on the other side of the aisle: Don't allow this nominee to destroy your party's hard-earned, commonsense efforts to protect clean air, clean water, and a sustainable Earth.

I urge us to come together—Senators on both sides of the aisle—to reject this effort to undo nearly five decades of bipartisan efforts to protect our environment and our planet.

The stakes are incredibly high for all of us. By rejecting this unsuitable nominee, we can reconsider our approach to the EPA. We can embrace this Nation's bipartisan commitment to protecting the environment for future generations. This is what the great majority of Americans want us to do. Let's listen to their voices, and let's say no to this nominee, Scott Pruitt, who is not only not qualified for this position, he is not committed to the EPA and its mission.

Mr. President, at this time I yield 30 minutes of my postcloture debate time to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise today, honored to speak after my colleague from New Hampshire and joining my other colleagues in opposing the nomination of Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Our beautiful natural resources define my home State of New Hampshire. From the White Mountains to the Seacoast, to our pristine lakes and our forests, our natural resources are critical to our economy, our environment, our way of life, and protecting these resources plays a critical role, as well, in protecting public health.

However, we are already beginning to see the real impacts of climate change in New Hampshire, and these impacts threaten to have major consequences for our natural resources and families and businesses in every corner of my State. Recognizing that fact, members of both parties have come together in New Hampshire to enact commonsense bipartisan solutions to take on climate change and to grow and maintain our State's renewable clean energy sector. We have worked to protect our land, our air and water, and the health of our citizens.

Unfortunately, it is clear from Mr. Pruitt's opposition to the Agency he will be tasked to lead, his record of working to weaken critical environmental protections that our citizens need to thrive, and his unwillingness to fight climate change, that he is unfit to serve in this position.

The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency begins with protecting our environment and the health of all of our citizens. The EPA does critical work to protect the water we drink and the air we breathe.

In recent years, the EPA has used sound scientific evidence to take strong measures to protect our environment. Unfortunately, President Trump has made clear that he does not support this critical Agency. Throughout his campaign, the President has repeatedly attacked the EPA, calling for its elimination and saying that our environment would be ''just fine'' without it. The President has doubled down on his hostility toward this Agency by nominating Mr. Pruitt to serve as its Administrator.

As attorney general, Mr. Pruitt has been a vocal critic of the very Agency he has now been nominated to lead, and he has been involved in over 20 legal actions against it.

According to the Washington Post, Mr. Pruitt has ''spent much of his energy as attorney general fighting the very agency he is being nominated to lead.''

On social media, Mr. Pruitt has referred to himself as ''a leading advocate against the EPA's activist agenda.'' He has questioned the role of the Agency, stating that ''the EPA was never intended to be our Nation's frontline environmental regulator.''

When asked by one of my colleagues if there were any clean air or clean water EPA regulations in place today that he could support, Mr. Pruitt declined to name a single one.

The foundation of a future where all Americans have an opportunity to thrive starts with a healthy environment and healthy families. The EPA serves an important role in protecting the health of our people. We must do better than having an Administrator who has fought so tirelessly to undermine the work that this Agency does.

I am also concerned by an EPA Administrator who has consistently voiced skepticism about the clear facts on climate change. Throughout my time in office, I have always fought to protect our environment and have been a strong supporter of curbing the impacts of climate change. As a State

senator, I sponsored legislation that allowed New Hampshire to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and I helped pass the State's renewable portfolio standard to maintain and grow New Hampshire's clean renewable energy sector.

During my time as Governor, I worked with members of both parties to strengthen and build on those efforts, signing legislation to update the renewable portfolio standard and to maximize the benefits of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

I am proud that my State has long led efforts to cut carbon emissions, and it is crucial that other States follow our lead and take responsibility for the pollution that they cause. That is exactly why I am a strong supporter of measures like the Clean Power Plan.

I also strongly support the Paris agreement on climate change and believe that the United States must take action to implement the agreement while also ensuring that our international partners fulfill their obligations.

Mr. Pruitt, however, has been a consistent skeptic on the role of climate change and the role that it has had on our environment.

Mr. Pruitt has stated that we do not know the extent of human impact on climate change and has called climate change a natural occurrence. He has said that climate change is ''one of the major policy debates of our time.''

And he continued:

> That debate is far from settled. Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind.

Scientists are clear in their understanding of the climate change science. The American Association for the Advancement of Science says the scientific evidence is clear: Global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now, and it is a growing threat to society.

The American Geophysical Union says that humanity is the major influence on the global climate change observed over the past 50 years.

The American Meteorological Society says it is clear from extensive scientific evidence that the dominant cause of the rapid change in climate of the past half a century is human-induced increases in the amount of atmospheric greenhouse gases.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that warming of the climate system is unequivocal and human influence on the climate system is clear.

The EPA is a science-based organization, and it is unacceptable for the EPA Administrator to be at odds with the well-established views of leading scientists. As the Agency's own website says:

> EPA is one of the world's leading environmental and human health research organizations. Science provides the foundation for Agency policies, actions, and decisions made on behalf of the American people. Our research incorporates science and engineering that meet the highest standards for integrity, peer review, transparency, and ethics.

Mr. Pruitt disagrees with well-established climate science. Simply put, that disqualifies him from leading an agency where ''science provides the foundation for . . . policies, actions, and decisions.'' If you refuse to believe research from the world's leading scientists, you cannot lead a science-based agency.

From protecting our environment to protecting public health, the EPA plays a critical role in protecting the health of Granite Staters and all Americans. We know that a cleaner environment plays a key role in the economy, for the economy of New Hampshire and our entire country. We should be building on the critical efforts the EPA has taken to combat climate change and protect public health, not rolling them back.

Mr. Pruitt's hostility to the basic functions of the Environmental Protection Agency and his work to undermine protections for clean air, land, and water make clear that he should not serve in this role.

I will vote against Mr. Pruitt's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the nomination of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

When Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee asked Scott Pruitt for critical information on his environmental record as attorney general of Oklahoma, Scott Pruitt said no to the Environment and Public Works Committee.

When Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee asked our fellow Republicans to delay Mr. Pruitt's vote until he got that important information, the Republican leadership here said: No, we won't wait for that critical information so that all Senators and the American people can understand who is being nominated.

When I asked Scott Pruitt if he would recuse himself from all issues relating to the cases that he has brought against the EPA as Oklahoma attorney general, Scott Pruitt said no to me.

Today we are here to respond to these very serious issues that are being raised about his ability to be an impartial Administrator of the EPA because the question before the American people and the Senate is whether Scott Pruitt should be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and that answer is no.

The EPA is our cop on the beat, protecting the American people and our environment from harmful pollution, hazardous waste, and the impacts of climate change. But as attorney general of Oklahoma, Scott Pruitt has tried to undermine the clean water rule and the Clean Air Act, putting the public health of millions of Americans at risk.

Scott Pruitt questions the science of climate change. Scott Pruitt has accused the EPA of overestimating air pollution from drilling of natural gas wells in Oklahoma. Scott Pruitt has argued against President Obama's Clean Power Plan, which the EPA is supposed to implement. Scott Pruitt has sued to block the EPA from restricting mercury, a toxin that causes brain damage in children in the United States.

The only thing that Scott Pruitt is certain of is that he wants to represent the interests of the fossil fuel industry. He wants to change the environmental watchdog into a polluter lapdog. And today we are drawing a line out here on the Senate floor because it is critical that the American people understand the moral implications for the water Americans drink, for the air they breathe, for the mercury that could go into the blood systems of children in our country, for the amount of smog that is allowed to be sent into the air, the amount of haze that is created across our country, and why the nomination of Scott Pruitt leads inevitably, inexplicably toward more pollution, more unhealthy air, and more unhealthy water going into the systems of our families across our country.

That really goes to what the moral duty is of the Senate, the moral duty we have to ordinary families across the country. Do Americans really think the air we are breathing is too clean? Do people really believe the water we drink is too clean? Do people really want to water down those standards? Do they want to reduce the safeguards we have put in place?

One hundred years ago, life expectancy in the United States was about 48 years of age. In other words, we had gone from the Garden of Eden all the way to about 100 years ago, and we had increased life expectancy to about 48 years of age—not much progress. Now, it was always good for the Methuselah family. The wealthy always did pretty well. They could protect themselves from the things that would affect ordinary families, poorer families, from the Bible to 100 years ago. But then what happened? All of a sudden there was an awakening in our country that we had to make sure the sewage systems in our country were not going to be able to pollute families across our society. Then step by step, beginning with sewage and water, we in our Nation came to understand that we had to remove the majority of pollutants that were out there that were damaging the lives of ordinary Americans. That was a change that transformed not just the United States but, over time, the whole rest of the world.

Now, 100 years later, life expectancy goes out to age 80. In other words, we have added 32 years of bonus life to the average American over the last 100 years. And what did it? Well, it is no

secret formula; it is just that we looked around and we saw the things we had to put in place in order to protect families, and we took a moral responsibility to make sure that those industries, especially those that were not providing protections, were forced to provide protections for those ordinary people.

Here we are now considering Scott Pruitt as the new Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Here is what Mr. Pruitt has done as the attorney general of Oklahoma: He has sued the national Environmental Protection Agency for the State of Oklahoma 19 times, and the issues on which he has sued are almost a litany of the things that go right to the heart of the protections the American people want for their families.

There are still eight cases that he brought pending before the EPA.

I said to Scott Pruitt in the confirmation hearing: Attorney General Pruitt, will you recuse yourself from consideration of any of those eight pending cases during the time you are Administrator of the EPA if you are confirmed? And Mr. Pruitt said no. Well, as I said to him in the hearing, if you do not recuse yourself, Mr. Pruitt, that turns you into the plaintiff, the defendant, the judge, and the jury for all of those cases, and that is just an unconscionable conflict of interest. As a result, he would never be seen as an impartial Administrator at the EPA as he moved forward trying to repeal or weaken environmental protections through regulations that he originally sought to accomplish through litigation.

We all know that across our country, overwhelmingly, the American people want—in the highest possible polling numbers, Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative—they want the EPA to protect clean air, clean water, public health. They don't want children unnecessarily being exposed to pollutants in the atmosphere that can cause asthma. Those numbers are going up. The goal in America is to see the numbers go down, but that will not be the agenda Scott Pruitt brings to the EPA if he is, in fact, confirmed.

This question of his fitness for this job also goes to the question of climate change. The science of climate change is now well established.

Pope Francis came to the Capitol a year and a half ago to deliver his sermon on the hill to us, and what Pope Francis said to us is very simple: No. 1, that the planet is dangerously warming and that it is something which is being caused by human activity largely and that those who are going to be most adversely affected are the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. As the Pope said, we have a moral responsibility to do something about it as the most powerful country in the world and, along with China, the leading polluter in the world. This is Pope Francis talking to us about climate change.

What does Scott Pruitt say about climate science? He says he is not quite certain any actions really have to be taken in order to deal with that issue. Well, we have a Pope who actually taught high school chemistry and who delivered a science and morality lesson to the Congress. He told us that science is certain, and he told us that our moral obligation is unavoidable.

If we had a nominee for the Environmental Protection Agency who embraced that science and morality, I would be voting for him, but that is not who Scott Pruitt is. He is ignoring the impact the fossil fuel industry is having, and he is unwilling to commit to taking steps that can reduce that danger for our planet and for the most vulnerable on the planet.

So I stand in opposition to his nomination, as I will be standing out here all day and into the night. I don't think that we are going to have a more important discussion than the direction of the health of our planet and the health of the children in our country. I think it is something that the American people have to hear all day and through the night.

With that, I see the arrival of the Senator from Ohio. I know that he has time to speak on the Senate floor. So I yield back my time so that my good friend Senator PORTMAN can be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for yielding his time.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. President, I rise today to talk about this issue of opioids—heroin, prescription drugs, now fentanyl—coming into our communities. It is at epidemic levels. We have worked on this issue over the last year in a bipartisan way and have made some progress. But I come today to the floor to report bad news and also to report something that Congress could do to help to address a new problem.

There was a report recently that came out by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission—very disturbing. It said that there is a new influx of what is called fentanyl coming in from China. This is a synthetic form of heroin. It can be up to 50 times more powerful than heroin. Think about that.

The report says:

> The majority of fentanyl products found in the United States originate in China. Chinese law enforcement officials have struggled to adequately regulate the thousands of chemical and pharmaceutical facilities operating legally and illegally in the country, leading to increased production and export of illicit chemicals and drugs. Chinese chemical exporters covertly ship these drugs to the Western Hemisphere.

So that comes from an official report from this Commission on the United States and China. It is confirmed, unfortunately, back home. I was home this week meeting with law enforcement on Monday. They told me: Rob, the top issue in our community is now not heroin; it is fentanyl, and it is this synthetic form of heroin that is far more powerful.

At least in their minds, they think that it is also more effective at making people addicted because it is less expensive and the trafficking of it is more aggressive. So this is a big concern because we were finally, I thought, making some progress on the prescription drugs and the heroin, and now this fentanyl, Carfentanil, and U4—it goes by various names depending on the chemical compounds—are coming into our communities.

It is truly scary. The consequences are, I hope, obvious to everybody now. We are losing one American every 12 minutes. This speech will be about 12 minutes. We will lose another American to an overdose. But it is getting worse, not better. By the way, it is everywhere. Last year, in 2016, every single State in the Union had at least one forensic lab test positive for fentanyl.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of positive forensic tests for fentanyl in the United States doubled, in fact, from 2014 to 2015. We believe it is worse. We know it is worse than 2016 from the information we have. Unfortunately, even this year, this month and a half, we have seen more and more evidence of fentanyl coming into our communities.

According to the China Commission's report, the top destination for Chinese fentanyl, by the way, is my home State of Ohio. We had more positive tests for fentanyl than any other State. By the way, Massachusetts—to my colleague who has been involved in this issue and worked on this issue and helped to try to stop the overprescribing of prescription drugs—was No. 2.

We are talking about 3,800 positive tests for fentanyl in Ohio alone. I do believe this is something that is being confirmed at the local level, not just from my meeting on Monday but from what I am hearing from around the State. Just 2 days after the Commission's report came out, in Butler County, OH, police seized $180,000 in fentanyl-laced heroin after suspected fentanyl overdoses killed five people in just 2 days.

Drug overdoses in Butler County, by the way, have nearly tripled since 2012. When I was in Dayton, I met with the Dayton R.A.N.G.E., which is a law enforcement task force—the Regional Agencies Narcotics and Gun Enforcement Task Force. They told me that this is now their biggest problem.

They said, because it is stronger, there are more overdoses and more deaths than there are with a similar amount of heroin or the number of people using heroin. They said that just over a 2-week period, they had seized more than 40 pounds of drugs off the streets, including 6 pounds of fentanyl last week. Now, 6 pounds of fentanyl, as I do the math, is at least 20,000 doses—20,000 doses in 1 town in Ohio.

I want to thank Montgomery County Sheriff Plummer, the task force, and

all of our law enforcement for their hard work to get this poison off the street. But they need our help. They need some additional tools. They told me about a 14-year-old girl who had tried fentanyl for the first time. She had never tried, apparently, any other drug. She snorted it. The people she was with had snorted drugs before, but she had not, which is one reason she not only overdosed but she died immediately. At 14 years old, her promising life was cut short.

It was in the Dayton suburb of Enon, a little more than a week ago, that a 5-year-old boy was seen running down the streets yelling: ''Mom and dad are dead. Mom and dad are dead.''

A driver saw the boy and called the police. They went to his house and found his parents. They weren't dead, fortunately, but they were unconscious. Mom was on the kitchen floor. Dad was on the living room floor. His skin had already turned blue, which is a sign of someone who overdoses and is close to death.

The first responders heroically saved both of them using Narcan—naloxone—this miracle drug that reverses the effects of an overdose. By the way, it took six doses of naloxone to revive the boy's father—a good sign, according to law enforcement, that this was not heroin but that it was heroin laced with fentanyl, something far stronger than the normal heroin—six doses.

We saw a 37-percent increase in drug overdose deaths last year in Dayton, OH, with victims as old as 87 and as young as 2 years old. Drug overdose deaths in Dayton are now on pace this year to be even more dramatic—54 deaths already in the last month and a half, which is more than any month and a half last year. Some 235 people have had their lives saved with naloxone. The Dayton Fire Department's call volume went up 17 percent compared to last January already.

So, again, it is not getting better. It is getting worse.

It is not just Dayton. It is not just cities. This addiction knows no ZIP code. In suburbs, rural areas, and the inner city—it is everywhere, and, by the way, in all demographics. In Medina County, OH, in Northeast Ohio, their overdoses doubled from 2015 to 2016. In Darke County, OH, north of Dayton, a rural county, they are on pace to quadruple last year's number of drug overdoses already this year.

So why are these increases happening? One of the reasons is because of the increasing potency of these drugs on the street, particularly, again, this move from heroin to synthetic heroin that is more powerful.

Dayton paramedic David Gerstner puts it this way:

> I don't want to say our overdose rate has increased dramatically—because that doesn't even come close to covering it . . . The potency of the drugs has increased to the point that instead of patients needing 2 milligrams of naloxone or 4 milligrams of naloxone or Narcan, we have had patients who need 20 milligrams or more.

Again, it takes many, many doses of Narcan, also called naloxone, to be able to save these lives. In Darke County, which, again, is north of Dayton, Rescue Chief Brian Phillips said:

> With the introduction of new illegally made synthetic opiates [like] fentanyl and Carfentanil, heroin users are overdosing at a more rapid rate. These derivatives are much more potent and deadlier. The majority of our overdoses are not breathing, and in some cases are in complete cardiac arrest. We are also finding ourselves using more Narcan to resuscitate these patients.

So this is the word from those who are in the trenches dealing with this every day. It is not good news. In just the first week of February, by the way, in his department in Darke County, OH, they had 12 overdose calls—in the first week of February. This is a town of 13,000 people.

So it is clear that these drugs are getting on the street, and they are stronger, more addictive, and more dangerous. Heroin is already addictive enough and relatively inexpensive compared to prescription drugs, which is why many people move from prescription drugs to heroin. Probably four out of five heroin addicts in Ohio started with prescription drugs, according to the experts.

But now it is being laced, this more powerful synthetic drug. The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation tested 34 cases of fentanyl in 2010. In 2015, they tested 1,100—a thirtyfold increase. Last year that number doubled again to 2,400 cases. Again, they have already tested for a record breaking number this year in the last month and a half.

According to the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network, you can buy small doses of heroin and fentanyl for as little as $5 to $10 now in Southwest Ohio. A lot parents and family members of those struggling with addiction worried about this, and it is very easy to see why. As the coroner in Butler County said:

> Buying heroin today is like playing Russian roulette . . . people don't know what's in the product they're going to use, and it may not be the same [from] one use to the next.

The coroner in my home town of Cincinnati, Lakshmi Sammarco, put it like this. You buy heroin, and ''you may be gambling with your life'' because it is more dangerous than ever.

We have to get that message out there. We have not done a good job of communicating this basic message that you are gambling with your life.

Dr. Richard Marsh, Clark County coroner, says:

> We're seeing a lot more fentanyl than heroin now. It started about the middle of 2015 . . . there are all kinds of labs producing it now and a lot of people think they're buying heroin when in fact they're getting fentanyl, which is fifty times as powerful.

How powerful is that? Let me give you an example. According to the DEA, or the Drug Enforcement Administration, it takes only 2 milligrams of fentanyl, about the same as a pinch of salt—think about that—to kill you. That is how powerful it is.

So again, going back to this China Commission report, they say most of these synthetic drugs are being made in labs in China and being shipped to the Western Hemisphere—to our country, to our communities.

How is it coming in? People are surprised to learn that it is coming in through the mail system. These deadly poisons are coming in through the mail system.

So unlike heroin, which primarily goes over land, primarily from Mexico, these drugs are actually coming in from Asia, from China and India, through the mail system. Unlike the private mail carriers, such as UPS or FedEx, our mail system does not require that people say where the package is coming from, what is in it, or where it is going. I think people are kind of surprised to hear that too.

That, of course, makes it is easier for the traffickers and much harder for our law enforcement to be able to deal with this problem. They cannot scan these packages that are suspect for drugs like fentanyl or other smuggled products because there are just too many packages—millions of packages. But if they had that information, if that was required on every package—electronically, in advance, digitally; this data, where it is coming from, what is in it, where it is going—our law enforcement officials tell us they would have a better shot at being able to stop this poison and being able to identify those packages.

I applaud my colleagues because with the Cures Act last year—it passed at the end of last year—we provided much more funding to our communities, to our States. Half a billion—$500 million—is going out to our States to be able to deal with the issue of drug treatment and recovery services. It is very important.

That $500 million, by the way, is this year and next year. That is really important to fight the epidemic. I also, of course, applaud my colleagues with regard to the legislation called CARA, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. This provides us with not just more funding but better practices with regard to prevention, education, treatment and recovery, and providing the police with Narcan training and providing more Narcan resources to our first responders, whom we talked about.

So again, in the last year, Congress has taken some important steps forward. I commend the House and Senate for that. By the way, it was bipartisan from the start. I think that is beginning to make a difference. I wish the programs in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act could be implemented more quickly.

Unfortunately, there are still five more CARA grant programs that have yet to be implemented. Many of us pushed the last administration. Now we are pushing this administration to move quickly on that because this crisis is out there in our communities

now. We need the help. But we are getting that in place, and that is important.

But we now need to build on those efforts because of this synthetic heroin that is coming in. An obvious step to me would be to simply say that the Postal Service has to require what the private carriers require so these traffickers are not favoring the Postal Service and so we can begin to stop some of these dangerous synthetic drugs from coming into our communities, but also so that we can give law enforcement a tool to be able to target this and so that, at a minimum, we can increase the cost of this poison coming into our communities. It seems common sense to me.

Last week, Senators KLOBUCHAR, HASSAN, RUBIO, and I introduced legislation called the Synthetic Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act, or STOP Act, to simply close the loophole and require the Postal Service to obtain advance electronic data on packages before they cross our borders. We just introduced it 2 days ago. It simply closes the loophole and requires the Postal Service to obtain advanced electronic data along the lines I talked about: where it is from, what is in it, where it is going.

In the House, by the way, there is companion legislation, which makes it easier to get this done because the House also understands this problem. My colleague, Congressman PAT TIBERI from Ohio, is one of the people who are focused on this issue. He is one of the cosponsors. The other cosponsor is from Massachusetts, RICHIE NEAL. Their companion legislation will make it easier for us to get this job done.

This bill is totally bipartisan—in fact, I would call it nonpartisan. It is based on expert testimony we had before our Homeland Security Committee, where we heard directly from law enforcement. It is a simple change that would make it much easier for them to detect these packages, particularly those from these Chinese labs that the China Commission report talked about.

It is not a silver bullet. No one has that silver bullet. But our bill will take away a key tool of drug traffickers and help restrict the supply of these drugs, this poison in our community, making their price higher and making it harder to get.

With the threat of synthetic heroin growing worse and worse every day, there is an urgency to this, so today I urge my colleagues to join us in this legislation. Cosponsor it. Let's get this through the committees.

The Finance Committee will be taking up this legislation. I am on that committee. I hope we move very quickly to mark it up, get it to the floor, pass the legislation here in the Senate, combine it with the legislation that is working through the House, get it to the President's desk for signature, and begin to provide some relief to our communities from this influx of synthetic heroin that is continuing to tear our families apart, devastate our communities, and ruin lives.

This is about ensuring that young people, like the young people who are with us today, the pages on the floor, have the opportunity to pursue their dream, whatever it is. This is about ensuring that we are stepping up as a Congress to deal with a global problem. It is coming in from overseas. It is an international problem. Certainly this is one where the Congress ought to act to ensure that our U.S. Postal Service does the right thing to help law enforcement be able to better protect our communities.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the nomination of Scott Pruitt to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. President Trump has made it clear that he wants to savage environmental protections, and his administration has already started down this path of reversing some of our hard-fought progress to ensure we have a clean environment: clean water and fresh air. By nominating Mr. Pruitt, President Trump has chosen someone equally hostile to the very notion of defending our environment and our Nation's health.

Respected voices on both sides of the aisle have expressed similar alarm over Mr. Pruitt's nomination. President George W. Bush's former EPA Administrator, Christine Todd Whitman, who led the Agency from 2001 to 2003, stated in reference to Mr. Pruitt: ''I don't recall ever having seen an appointment of someone who is so disdainful of the Agency and the science behind what the Agency does.''

This is a sentiment I have heard from over a thousand Rhode Islanders—environmentalists, researchers, conservationists, community leaders, parents, concerned citizens—who agree that Mr. Pruitt is a troubling choice for this role. They have contacted my office to express how distressed they are that someone with Mr. Pruitt's record and background could be chosen to lead the EPA.

Last week I hosted a roundtable to hear these concerns directly from my constituents. These Rhode Islanders shared their worries about the state of our changing environment, anxiousness about Mr. Pruitt's nomination, and concerns over what they have seen so far, and fear is coming with respect to the Trump administration's approach to our environment. Nevertheless, they remain committed to ensuring that we have clean air and clean water because these natural resources are so important to our economy, our health, and our quality of life.

I share that commitment. I have consistently voted for strong environmental policies that seek to limit pollution, promote renewable energy, and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The EPA oversees the Federal Government's role in protecting our health and environment. It needs a leader who fundamentally believes in its core mission. Scott Pruitt has a record of working against the Agency's goals to protect Americans from pollution. That is the goal of the Agency. He does not believe or respect the scientific findings regarding climate change, and his close ties to the oil and gas industry are a serious concern.

These kinds of beliefs and views should be of concern to everyone in this Chamber.

As Oklahoma's attorney general, Mr. Pruitt sued the EPA multiple times seeking to eliminate pollution regulations. He has a record of not only challenging the legal, scientific, and technical foundations of EPA rules, but he has also questioned the EPA's authority to issue them.

Mr. Pruitt filed as the plaintiff in these lawsuits, many of which are still pending. If confirmed as the EPA Administrator, he would be switching sides to become the defendant in these lawsuits. And yet, he has refused to recuse himself from any of these or related cases. He has also failed to provide records of his communications with fossil fuel companies during the years he served as attorney general.

It is abundantly clear that he cannot be impartial.

This lack of transparency regarding Mr. Pruitt's connections to the oil and gas industry raises serious questions about what influence these conflicts will have on his ability to enforce regulations that protect everyday Americans from pollution generated by fossil fuel use.

The EPA Administrator must be someone who will uphold and enforce Federal environmental laws impartially and honorably, with Americans' health in mind.

One issue in particular that comes to mind is one I have worked on for decades across multiple Federal agencies—lead poisoning prevention. I have long advocated for better Federal policies and more funding to protect children from lead hazards. While the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention do much of this work, the EPA plays an important role as well.

I think we saw that very clearly over the last year with the situation in Flint, MI.

I was deeply concerned that when asked about lead poisoning among children during his confirmation hearing, Mr. Pruitt told the committee that he, in his own words, ''really wasn't familiar with the basic science surrounding

the health effects of lead poisoning.'' For the sake of his education on this issue—and to make all my colleagues who might not be aware of the impact—lead poisoning in children can cause serious and irreversible developmental and health problems.

We need an EPA Administrator who is familiar with and committed to protecting the health of our children from these and other kinds of environmental health hazards. Unfortunately, I do not believe Mr. Pruitt is qualified to do so.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Pruitt also displayed a lack of understanding of the role human activity plays in climate change, as well as a disregard for the scientists who have spent their lives studying and carefully observing our Earth's changing climate.

Our next EPA Administrator should understand the threat of climate change and base the Agency's policies on scientific data and findings without ideological influence. Many people across the Nation were distressed and deeply concerned by the removal of climate change reports from the EPA's website shortly after President Trump took office. I share that concern, and I am disturbed that the EPA has recently put a hold on issuing new grants and instituted a gag order on all communications.

This is alarming. The halting of Federal funds means that our investments in our water infrastructure, remediation of our watersheds, and support for numerous others environmental initiatives so vital to our local communities and States will be affected, and this will seriously harm environmental protection efforts. In Rhode Island, these cuts could have devastating effects, such as hindering the State's ability to provide clean air and clean drinking water for all residents.

We need an EPA Administrator who is committed to safeguarding clean water and clean air and who is experienced in environmental protection. This role demands someone who is prepared to preserve and defend our environment from harm, who can make decisions based on scientific evidence, and whose financial ties will not impact his decisions when it comes to protecting the American public from pollution.

Scott Pruitt is not the EPA Administrator we need. The nature of the lawsuits he filed attempting to dismantle EPA regulations that protect clean air and water—the very regulations he would be charged with enforcing—demonstrates that he is not committed to defending our natural resources, our health, and our well-being. Mr. Pruitt, in my estimate, is unsuited and unqualified for this critical leadership position.

For these reasons, I cannot support his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting no.

Mr. President, I respectfully ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to yield the remainder of my time on this nomination to my colleague, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE from Rhode Island.

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

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote no on the nomination of Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, a nomination that marks yet another broken promise from the new President to put the needs of American families first over the wishes of big corporations and special interests. And just like we have seen with Betsy DeVos at the Department of Education or Steve Mnuchin at Treasury, we have yet another Trump nominee whose record demonstrates a direct conflict with the mission of the agency they wish to lead. On the EPA's website, that mission is pretty clear—''to protect human health and the environment''—and EPA achieves that by enforcing regulations based on laws passed by Congress. So I will be voting no on this nomination.

I want to make two points on why Mr. Pruitt heading up the EPA would be wrong for our country and why it would be wrong for the families I represent in Washington State. It starts with his record and clear conflicts of interest.

During Mr. Pruitt's term as the attorney general for Oklahoma, he filed no less than 19 cases to overturn environmental regulations, including one to topple the EPA's Clean Power Plan. These regulations specifically seek to protect public health by reducing harmful air and water pollution and are projected to save tens of thousands of lives each year.

As if it wasn't bad enough that Mr. Pruitt spent so much time filing lawsuits in court and fighting policies designed to protect the health of the environment as well as people, it is pretty shocking that at the same time, he was collecting millions of dollars from the very industries he will regulate if he is confirmed. This is no small conflict of interest between his former and potentially future position, and that he was still nominated to be EPA Administrator is mind-blowing to me.

I echo the sentiments of so many who have expressed serious concerns about Mr. Pruitt's conflict of interest, that his ties to the fossil fuel industry make him more indebted to backing policies that loosen environmental regulations, benefiting big oil and gas companies, rather than backing policies that protect the American people.

Mr. President, I want to voice another concern my constituents have shared with me. It is unnerving to think the President would choose a climate change denier to set our national environmental policy. I don't see how someone who has openly denied the existence of climate change—the devastating effects of which we are already beginning to see in Washington State and around the country—will effectively protect human health or the environment.

This is about more than just the environment. A report by the Congressional Budget Office last year found that climate change is a serious threat to our economic stability. As the occurrence of national disasters continues to rise, the cost of disaster assistance and rebuilding rises too.

If we want to be responsible about tackling our fiscal challenges—which I would think the President and Mr. Pruitt would agree on—we need to take the impacts of climate change seriously. At a time when we are already seeing the very real effects of climate change in my home State, from longer, more devastating wildfire seasons to ocean acidification and rising sea levels, it is more important than ever. This brings me to how Mr. Pruitt's confirmation would be devastating for my home State of Washington.

As someone who personally spends a great deal of time fishing and hiking in my home State of Washington, I am committed to conservation and preservation efforts so generations to come can appreciate the high quality of life we enjoy and experience the splendor of America's natural spaces, one of the most important being the restoration and recovery of salmon runs and habitat throughout the Pacific Northwest, which is a vital part of our Northwest economy and its heritage.

I am deeply concerned about whether this support would continue under an EPA Administrator like Mr. Pruitt. I have similar concerns about the Hanford cleanup, a critical part of our State's history that EPA plays a very important role in to protect the health and safety of our Tri-Cities community, Columbia River, and Washington State.

I will fight against any EPA nominee or an Administrator who will not join us in the fight for a better future for generations to come. I sincerely hope the President and Mr. Pruitt truly understand the enormous responsibility of the Environmental Protection Agency, not only in protecting our environment for future generations but for the families we represent who rely on clean air and clean water right now.

For the sake of our children and grandchildren, we need to act now to avoid lasting, irreversible damage to our health, our environment, our economy, and our country's future. I am not confident in putting that future in Scott Pruitt's hands.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the remainder of my postcloture debate time to Senator CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator CARPER can receive 21 minutes of that time.

Mrs. MURRAY. Additionally, I yield the remainder of my time beyond that, of my postcloture debate time, to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to rescind my previous request and reclaim my time.

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

Mr. REED. Thank you, 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. CASEY. 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. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to speak in opposition to the nomination of the Oklahoma attorney general, Scott Pruitt, to be the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency which we all know as the EPA.

My concern—I have a number of them, but the principal concern of Mr. Pruitt's nomination is rooted in his record, which I believe is totally inconsistent with the mission of the EPA. That mission is to protect human health and the environment. We know the EPA achieves this core goal through the development and enforcement of standards to protect children and families from exposure to dangerous pollutants in our air and water.

Protection of human health means ensuring that our children have clean air and clean water, tackling climate change, which leads to the kind of food insecurity that causes malnutrition in children throughout the world.

I have to say that as a Pennsylvanian, I think I have an obligation to not only speak about these issues but to fight on behalf of policies that will advance the knowledge and mission of the EPA but will be consistent with the directive I am obligated to follow in my State's constitution. In Pennsylvania, if you go back to the founding of Pennsylvania forward, we had many generations, especially through the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, throughout most of the 1800s and into the 1900s, until about the midcentury point, where we didn't do a very good job of protecting our air and water and human health because we let one or another industry pretty much do whatever they wanted until the modern era. Fortunately, since that time, Pennsylvania has made a lot of progress. One of the measures of that progress and something I am bound by is a provision of the State's constitution, article I, section 27, that says people shall ''have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment.''

That constitutional provision goes on to talk about each of us as citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania being trustees of the environment—especially and ever more so if you are a part of State government, and I would argue the Federal Government as well. To say I feel an obligation is a major understatement. I think I am bound by that, and that enters into my determination and analysis of Mr. Pruitt's record.

We know in recent years the EPA, acting under the authority it is granted through laws like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, has developed a number of important standards to advance these priorities—rules like the mercury and air toxics standards, the cross-state air pollution rule, the ozone rule, the new source performance standards for the oil and natural gas industry, the Clean Power Plan, which is meant to obviously focus our policy on climate change, and other policies to reduce exposure to pollutants like methane, volatile organic compounds, mercury, and carbon pollution itself.

According to the American Lung Association's ''State of the Air 2016'' report, these rules reduce the likelihood of premature death, asthma attacks, lung cancer, and heart disease. I would hope that if you have a series of measures in place that reduce the likelihood of asthma attacks, lung cancer, heart disease, and premature death—I would hope we would not only advance those policies but make sure they are not destroyed, undermined, or compromised. It is just common sense to make sure we regulate pollutants like lead, mercury, arsenic, and acid gases, just by way of example.

Yet Mr. Pruitt, who is the attorney general of Oklahoma, filed 14 lawsuits against the EPA to halt the regulation of these pollutants that threaten our children's health. Mr. Pruitt has stood up for the interests of oil and gas companies but has failed to defend, in my judgment, the most vulnerable members of our society, or at least not defend them to the extent that I would hope he would, not only as attorney general of Oklahoma but as the EPA Administrator were he to be confirmed.

When asked during his confirmation to name one clean air or clean water regulation he supported, he couldn't name one.

I believe his record is clear. He fought to dismantle the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, anti-pollution programs to target ozone and mercury in the air, the agreement to clean up the Chesapeake Bay—which I will get to in a moment—and has even denied the science of climate change. Suffice it to say, I have a number of basic concerns about his record and what he would do were he to be confirmed.

One example of the concerns I have involve the Chesapeake Bay with regard to impact in Pennsylvania. Although Pennsylvania doesn't border the Chesapeake, the Pennsylvania Susquehanna River is the bay's largest source of freshwater. Improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay requires a sustained, coordinated commitment from all of the States in the watershed. I have repeatedly written to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for increased funding and technical assistance for farmers in Pennsylvania so Pennsylvania can continue to improve the health of the Susquehanna River and the bay.

Pennsylvania has made great strides in addressing the issue of nutrient and sediment runoff into the Chesapeake Bay, but there is more to be done, and Pennsylvania is far from meeting its 2005 Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction goals.

Ensuring that all States in the watershed are coordinated and meeting their commitments is exactly the type of role the EPA should be filling. Mr. Pruitt called the EPA's Chesapeake Bay TMDL standard ''the culmination of the EPA's decade-long attempt to control exactly how States achieve federal water quality requirements under the Clean Water Act, and marks the beginning of the end of meaningful state participation in water pollution regulation.''

Well, I disagree. We don't have time to outline all the reasons, but I strongly disagree with that assessment of the EPA's actions with regard to the Chesapeake Bay, but we do have a long way to go to make sure that we keep it clean. So on clean water, I think we have to insist that neither the EPA Administrator nor anyone in Congress does anything compromising when it comes to clean water.

Climate change. This fall I had an opportunity to spend time in Pennsylvania with Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, one of the leaders in the Senate on the issue of climate change. We did a tour, and one of the places we went was the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. It is America's first urban refuge named after one of my predecessors, Senator Heinz, who tragically died in 1991, but his work on the environment is remembered in places like this wildlife refuge. This is a public space that allows us to enjoy wildlife, outdoor recreation, and environmental education opportunities right outside of a major city—in this case, Philadelphia. And this refuge also plays a vital role in climate change resiliency.

Marshes help to filter pollutants from water and can absorb water during heavy rain events, thus helping to reduce the magnitude of flooding. However, the refuge is facing a number of environmental stressors.

Sea level rise could have serious consequences for this fresh water marsh. Not only would rising sea levels lead to the loss of undeveloped dry land and habitat for wildlife, but increased salinity could change the plant makeup of this marsh at the wildlife refuge.

According to EPA, Pennsylvania's climate has warmed more than half a degree Fahrenheit in just the last century. Sea level has also risen nearly 1 foot over the past century, according

to NOAA, measured by the tidal gauge in Philadelphia. That means that significant portions of the city of Philadelphia could be underwater, including the Philadelphia International Airport, if we fail to act.

We know that 2016 was the warmest year on record for a third year in a row. Also, climate change is not some distant possibility in Pennsylvania or throughout the Nation; it is real, and we are already feeling the effects of climate change.

I will close with one story from one mother who talks about air quality, or the impact of bad air quality and the issue of climate change itself. Jacqueline Smith-Spade, a mother from Philadelphia, recently wrote to me about her 6-year-old son Jonas's struggle with asthma and the emotional and financial toll it takes on her family:

> Every time there is an extreme or irregular climate shift, I can pretty much predict that my son is going to end up in the emergency room due to the effect of air quality.

She goes on to say later in the letter:

> I routinely check the air quality to help predict what type of day my son and my family might have: With or without nebulizer?
>
> The physical toll on Jonas also creates a financial burden on my family. The emergency visits cost $100 each time we go; $30 copays for each specialist visit; $15 copays for each pediatrician visit.

She goes on to say:

> This is not cheap; however, my insurance greatly helps to reduce the costs.

She worries, of course, about what might happen on healthcare, but I will not read all of those portions.

She concludes this part of the letter this way:

> A reduction in air pollution and climate change will make life for my 7-year-old son, Jonas, much easier. His reactions to those changes will be reduced. It will also save my family countless dollars, stress, and panic attacks.

So said one mom about her son Jonas.

What we must do, and especially what Mr. Pruitt must do, were he to be confirmed, is to answer her questions—to answer her questions, Jacqueline's questions, and the concerns she has about her son Jonas. She is not only a taxpayer, but she is someone who will be impacted directly by the actions and the policies that come from this administration as well as the EPA itself.

So I believe that Mr. Pruitt, if he were to be confirmed, must meet the expectations of Jonas and his mother. He works for them, or will work for them, were he to be confirmed.

I know I am out of time. I will just conclude with this: There are a long series of reasons, some of which I wasn't able to get to today, that undergird and form the foundation of my decision not to support the nomination of Scott Pruitt as the next EPA Administrator.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today is February 16, 2017. President Trump was sworn in on January 20, 2017.

For the past several weeks now, we have come to the floor and talked about the slow pace at which the Senate has considered and voted on the President's nominees for his Cabinet. Well, there is good reason for that because one of our roles is to consider and vote on advisers selected by the President, regardless of political party, and to help this new administration lead the country.

President Obama, to his credit, after the election, sat down with President-Elect Trump and said he was committed to a peaceful transition of power from his administration to the Trump administration. But, apparently, some of our colleagues didn't get the memo. We continue to slog along at the slowest pace since George Washington to vote on nominees to the President's Cabinet.

The reason it has gone on so slowly is clear by now. It is because our friends across the aisle are still upset and have not yet reconciled themselves with the results of the election on November 8. They just kind of can't get over it. Yes, they are being encouraged by the radical elements of their party who don't want us to fulfill our responsibilities, who don't want a new President to have the Cabinet that he needs in order to govern the country. Yes, there are some who want to halt our work in this Chamber and perpetuate dysfunction. They don't want us to focus on legislating because they want to keep us tied up in the confirmation process.

I will just interject right here, as I have said before, that we know these nominees will be confirmed because, thanks to the nuclear option under Senator Reid, the previous Democratic leader, all it takes is 51 votes to confirm a nominee to a Cabinet post. But the fact is, the country needs a functioning Senate. We need a functioning executive branch.

So I hope our colleagues across the aisle will understand soon that if they want to be effective—if they want to actually move the needle and help those who have entrusted them with the future of this country—then we need to turn from gridlock to action.

Last Congress, even under President Obama in the White House, we did not let partisan dysfunction keep us from working together. There is a difference between elections and governing. But, for some reason, too many people want to keep relitigating the election and not allow us to actually govern.

Of course, during the Obama administration, Republicans had many points of departure from the Obama administration, and we used the tools available to us to provide the oversight and ask the critical questions that the American people demanded. But our friends across the aisle are now being tempted to shut down the government, to run away from policy debates, and point fingers. Why? Because it is always easier to throw stones than it is to actually accomplish something—roll up your sleeves, focus on the task, and turn to legislating.

Yes, it may be easier just to criticize and to obstruct, but it is not the right thing for the American people. Our colleagues across the aisle know that, but, as I said earlier, they are being unduly influenced by some of the radical elements in their political base who will not let them do it or who say that if you do cooperate on a bipartisan basis and actually do your job, then we are going to recruit people to run against you in a primary.

Well, that is part of the risk we all take. We didn't come here to appease a portion of our political base and neglect our most basic duties as Members of the U.S. Senate. Again, I would point to last Congress and the work we did together on a bipartisan basis, I might add, as evidence of what you can accomplish when you try to do that.

The 114th Congress, after the 2014 election, saw a new majority, a new Republican leadership, and we did our best to help restore order to this Chamber and get it working again after years of dysfunction. Under the previous regime, Members of both the majority and minority parties were actually prevented from coming to the floor and offering legislative ideas in the form of amendments and getting votes on them, but that backfired when some of our colleagues who were running for reelection in 2014 realized that they had very little to show the voters by way of accomplishment—even those in the majority party, the Democratic Party, at that time. So one would have thought that there would be some lessons learned there.

In the last Congress—in the 114th Congress that began 2 years ago—we voted on legislative ideas from both sides of the aisle with more than 250 rollcall votes. That represented a sea change from the previous administration and the way Senator Reid ran things.

We were able to get the Senate functioning as the Founders intended, and that led to big results for the American people. We took care of big, intractable problems that had trouble getting anywhere during the previous Congresses. For example, we passed a transportation bill—the highway bill—to help Americans deal with safety on the roadway, to deal with concerns about pollution due to congestion and people in gridlock, and we helped our economy in the process. That was a big, important bill. That was the first time we had been able to pass a long-term highway bill in about 30 different, separate attempts where we had patched the funding mechanism for 6 months or a year, which made it nearly impossible for our highway departments across the country to actually plan. It actually ended up being more expensive and less effective than it would be with a multiyear highway bill, which we

passed. So that was a big bipartisan accomplishment.

We also made great progress in reforming our public education system by passing, again, on a bipartisan basis, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which went a long way to devolving power from here in Washington, DC, back to the States, back to local school districts, back to parents and teachers—something that, fortunately, we were able to agree upon on a bipartisan basis. That change was applauded by my constituents back home, and, I believe, people around the country.

We also made great headway in making our country safer and our government more just by taking up and passing legislation to support victims of abuse and violence and to craft laws to better equip our law enforcement to handle growing threats.

For example, we passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act 99 to 0. Some people say that nothing ever gets done in Washington; well, 99 to 0—it is hard to beat that, except by maybe 100 to 0, but we will take it.

That law was signed into law by President Obama 2 years ago, and it is helping victims of human trafficking get the healing and recovery they need, while also providing help to law enforcement to help root out the people who patronize modern day slavery, which is what human trafficking amounts to.

We also, on a bipartisan basis, reauthorized the Justice for All Act to strengthen victims' rights in court and increase access to restitution and services that can help them recover. It helps reduce the national backlog in untested rape kits, forensic evidence collected after a sexual assault that is necessary to identify the assailant through the use of DNA testing. That was really important, after we heard the horror stories of as many as 400,000 untested rape kits in laboratories or evidence lockers—evidence which was critical to identifying the assailant; many times they were serial assailants. In other words, they didn't just attack one time, they attacked multiple times over the years—and to get them off the streets. That type of evidence is also very important in exonerating the innocent because if we can exclude someone from one of these terrible assaults, that means a person who is innocent of the crime will be free.

We also passed a bill called the POLICE Act, signed into law last summer, so our first responders and law enforcement officers can learn the latest techniques to deal with violence so they are ready to face the unimaginable or previously unimaginable threats in our communities.

I could go on and on, but I will just mention a few more. We passed bipartisan legislation to combat opioid abuse and heroin addiction, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. We passed laws to make our government more transparent so it is more accountable to the public and to voters. We helped capitalize on our God-given natural resources by lifting the crude oil export ban, for example—something important not only to domestic producers and job creation here but also to our friends and allies around the world who frequently depend on a single source for their energy. Unfortunately, people like Vladimir Putin in Russia have discovered you can use that sole source of energy as a weapon by threatening to cut it off.

The reason I mention some of these accomplishments is to make the point that nothing happens in Congress, nothing happens in the Federal Government, unless it is bipartisan.

It is one thing to fight hard in an election and try to win the election so you can gain the privilege of actually being in the majority or having the White House, but after the election is over, our responsibilities shift to governing. Right now, our friends across the aisle are continuing to obstruct and drag their feet and make it impossible for the President to get the Cabinet he needs in order to get the government up and running.

We need to return to the pattern we established in the last Congress, to work together, to build consensus, to help make America stronger, our citizens safer, and our laws a better service to all the people. I would plead with our colleagues across the aisle to stop the dysfunction, stop wanting to relitigate the outcome of the election. You can't. It is over. We know what the outcome was. They need to move on, and we need to move on—not just for the political parties we are members of, not just for the benefit of those elected here in Washington but for the benefit of 320-some-odd million people whom we have the responsibility of representing. Instead of foot-dragging, obstruction, and dysfunction, let us fight, as we always have, for those people we represent and work together to find common ground where we can to put forward legislation that serves them well.

I hope our colleagues across the aisle would remember those lessons they learned in the 2014 election; that dysfunction is bad politics. It does not help their political cause. I understand the temptation of wanting to yield to the most radical elements in a political party, but we are elected to the Senate for 6-year terms to be that cooling saucer, to try to have debate and deliberation, to try to work out the hard problems. That is our responsibility, and just to blindly obstruct when you know you can't change the outcome—particularly when it comes to the President getting the Cabinet he has chosen and he deserves—makes no sense whatsoever.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, there are few things that I enjoy more than bragging about my hometown. I live in a little town called Yuma, CO, out in the Eastern Plains. It is a town of about 3,500 people. If maybe you over-exaggerate a little bit, it reaches 4,000. It is out in the middle of the High Plains of Colorado, 4,000 feet in elevation, 40 miles or so from the Kansas-Nebraska border. It is a farming community, 100 percent farming. Everything related to the town is farming. Even the clothing stores are related to farming because if you don't have a strong agriculture economy, nobody is buying blue jeans, nobody is going up to the car dealership to buy a pickup if the bushel of corn isn't priced right. So everything we do in that town is related to agriculture and farming.

My family comes from a background of farm equipment business and started a business—101 years old this year—by my great-grandfather. My time working in the dealership started roughly when I was in seventh, eighth grade. They let me do some very complicated tasks, high-skill tasks they let me perform: cleaning the bathroom, sweeping the floors. I did that throughout my time in eighth grade, high school, and college. If I go back today, I am sure they would let me do the same job, clean the bathrooms and sweep the floors. Part of that is because I was selling the wrong parts to a lot of farmers who would come into the dealership. Maybe they were just keeping me off the parts counter for the time being. In fact, maybe that is why people voted for me, to get me off the parts counter and quit selling the wrong parts.

Over my time working at the dealership, we witnessed a lot of good times in agriculture. I can remember one time going into my dad's and granddad's office and saying: You know what, the economy is really good. The price of corn is really high right now. We ought to order a whole bunch of farm equipment—a whole bunch of pieces of implements, tillage equipment, tractors, combines—and have them on the lot so we can take advantage of the good times in agriculture.

My granddad paused and looked at my dad and said: No, I don't think we should do that because I don't think times are going to be good next year.

They were right. This was back in probably the mid-1990s. They had seen it coming because of their experience in the business, the ebbs and flows of agriculture, the good times and the bad times. They were able to recognize, through their own experience, what different economic indicators meant to them and how they could forecast, using their experience, what was going to happen in the farm world the next year. So they decided not to order all that brandnew equipment. They decided not to order the tractors, the combines, and the tillage equipment. It was a good thing because the next year wasn't that great. If this 18-year-old, 19-year-old kid would have had his way, we would have had a whole lot of iron

we were paying interest on that year without being able to sell it.

Colorado is pretty blessed, with 4,000 companies involved in agriculture, 173,000 jobs in Colorado directly involved in agriculture. The State has more than 35,000 farms and 31 million acres used for farming and ranching. If we look at the Colorado business economic outlook, the net farm income of ranchers and farmers in 2016 is estimated this year to be the lowest it has been since 1986, and the projections for 2017 are even lower.

I grew up as a kid in the 1980s, watching perhaps the hardest times agriculture in the United States had faced in decades, watching a lot of people I knew my whole life going out of business, people having to sell the farm because of what was happening in the 1980s, leading to a banking crisis in agriculture in the 1980s, watching banks I had grown up with close.

I am concerned in this country that we are going to see the same thing again, beginning in 2016, into 2017, and then into 2018 next year. I am very worried that those tough times we saw in the 1980s, and some of the tough with the good times we saw in the 1990s, and some really good years a few years ago are going to seem like distant memories come later this summer and into next year if we don't do something.

I had the opportunity to visit with the Colorado commissioner of agriculture in my office last week, a gentleman by the name of Don Brown. Don Brown is from my hometown of Yuma, CO. It has done pretty well for itself, 3,000 people. The State commissioner of agriculture is from my hometown. The previous commissioner of agriculture, a gentleman by the name of John Stoltz, was from my hometown of Yuma. Both of them grew up in agriculture in that area, understanding what it is like on the High Plains, understanding what it is like to live through good times and bad times. Both of them today I think would tell you, they are very concerned as well about what happens over the next year, the next 2 years.

It wasn't that long ago when we saw some of the highest priced commodities this country has ever seen, at least in a very long time—the golden years of agriculture, some people said—where corn and wheat were priced high. People were able to pay their bills and buy new equipment. Commodity prices don't always stay that high though. The one thing a farmer will tell you is, the price of a piece of farm equipment stays high, the price of fertilizer seems to stay high. When prices come down on their commodities, the other prices—the inputs—stay high, and they find themselves in significant trouble.

The price of corn today is estimated to be about $3.15 per bushel. That is what it was in 2016, less than half of the 10-year high price of corn of $6.86 in 2012, just a few years ago. To put that in historical context, the price of corn in 2016 at $3.15 is lower than the price of corn in 1974, the year I was born, when it was $3.20. The price of corn in 2016 was 5 cents lower than it was the year I was born, 1974. It is the same story across the board for Colorado. Wheat prices are down more than $1 from 2015 to 2016 alone and down more than 50 percent since 2012. I can guarantee, even though I may have sold a lot of wrong parts at the implement dealership, those wrong parts didn't come down in price 50 percent.

The livestock industry has seen similar trends, with cattle prices at their lowest level since 2010. In farming and agriculture, a lot of times we might see a year where the price of corn is high, but the price of cattle is low or the price of other commodities are high where the price of cattle is low, but when cattle are high, maybe other commodities are low. Farmers who have a diverse operation are able to offset the lows and the highs with a diverse operation—but not this year, and it looks like that may be the case next year.

Declines in States' agriculture economy are not unique to Colorado. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, revenues have decreased for agriculture nationwide by more than 10 percent since 2014.

Recently, the Wall Street Journal wrote this, and I will show the headline of the Wall Street Journal piece just a couple of weeks ago. The Wall Street has an article entitled ''The Next American Farm Bust Is Upon Us.''

We have had a lot of debates on this floor. We have had debates about Cabinet members. We have had debates about resolutions of disapprovals. We are talking about a lot of things, but there is a lot of suffering beginning in the heartland of America right now. A lot of farmers and ranchers are suffering. They are worried about how they are going to survive, not just into the next year but how they are going to survive into the next couple of months. The telltale signs of difficult times are all around us in agriculture. This article, ''The Next American Farm Bust Is Upon Us,'' begins to tell the story. Here is what the Wall Street Journal said:

> The Farm Belt is hurtling toward a milestone: Soon there will be fewer than two million farms in America for the first time since pioneers moved westward after the Louisiana Purchase.
>
> Across the heartland, a multiyear slump in prices for corn, wheat and other farm commodities brought on by a glut of grain worldwide is pushing many farmers further into debt. Some are shutting down, raising concerns that the next few years could bring the biggest wave of farm closures since the 1980s.

The article highlights the story of a fifth-generation farmer from Western Kansas. I mentioned my hometown is 40 miles away from Kansas. It looks very similar to the Eastern Plains of Colorado where I live. Here is his story:

> From his father's porch, the 56-year-old can see the windswept spot where his great-grandparents' sod house stood in 1902 when they planted the first of the 1,200 acres on which his family farms alfalfa, sorghum and wheat today. Even after harvesting one of their best wheat crops ever last year, thanks to plentiful rain and a mild winter, Mr. Scott isn't sure how long they can afford to keep farming that ground.

There is a lot of work we need to do to make sure Mr. Scott and farmers who live in my community around the Eastern and Western Slope of Colorado will be able to survive over the next year—steps so we can help to make sure we are addressing this crisis head-on, before it begins and develops into a full-blown farm crisis like we saw in the 1980s. We must have serious regulatory reform.

In a letter I received from the Colorado Farm Bureau, the letter read:

> Colorado Farm Bureau recognizes that a major impediment to the success of American agricultural industries and the national economy is rampant federal regulation and the associated cost of compliance.

We have to allow U.S. agriculture to flow to markets around the world, so in addition to that regulatory reform—some of which we are undertaking now through resolutions of disapproval by peeling back the overreach of government, we have to allow farmers access to more markets. That is a concern we all should share: What is going to happen with our trade policy in this country? Because if we decide to shut off trade in this country, if we decide to close access and avenues to new markets, the first people who are going to be hurt are those farmers and ranchers in Colorado and Kansas and throughout the Midwest of the United States. We have to have the opportunity to be able to send that bushel of wheat to Asia, that bushel of corn around the globe to make sure we are providing value-added opportunities for the world's best farmers and ranchers. Opening up new markets for Colorado and American agriculture is a clear way we can support rural economies.

Let's be clear. What I said at the beginning of these comments—there are farm communities that have diversity in their economic opportunities. A farm economy may not be 100 percent dependent on farms or ranches. Maybe they have tourism. Maybe they have some recreational opportunities. Maybe they are close to a big city where people can live there and commute. But there are a lot of towns across the United States that are solely, 100 percent committed to agriculture. They don't have access to anything but farming and ranching. When the price is down, the town is down. When the town is down, Main Street erodes. When Main Street erodes, it affects our schools and our hospitals and our relationships and our families. And somebody has to be looking out for our farmers and ranchers because the next American farm bust is upon us.

We have to take the necessary steps to pass a farm bill that gets our policies right when the new one expires. The current one expires in 2016, and these discussions are just now underway. If we have regulatory reform, if

we open up new trade opportunities for agriculture and we give farmers certainty—those are three things we can do to help address this crisis before it becomes a full-blown crisis.

We have to make sure that we support our farmers and ranchers, that we have their backs in good times and in bad times. Giving farmers certainty through a farm bill, through a regulatory landscape that provides certainty and relief, is important.

I talked to a family member of mine the other day who talks about his fear that he sees conditions similar to what we saw in the 1980s. The final relief we can provide is relief from financial regulations that are stifling the ability of banks to provide workout opportunities for farmers and ranchers when they need it.

Four things we ought to be doing for our farmers and ranchers: provide them certainty, regulatory relief, new trade opportunities, and targeted financial relief on regulations that are preventing workouts through our banks and our communities.

We have the opportunity now to prevent this country from seeing what it saw in the 1980s, but let's not be reactionary. Let's do what we can to get ahead of this before we start seeing what Secretary-designee Perdue told me the other day. One of the customers of his agricultural business took his life because he didn't know what was going to happen to his farm, and his three kids are now left wondering what they are going to do.

I hope this country understands how supportive we are of American agriculture and the actions we need to take to stand with them when times get tough.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to explain to my colleagues why I will be opposing the nomination of Scott Pruitt, the attorney general of Oklahoma, to be the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

I first want to start by saying I had an opportunity to visit with Attorney General Pruitt. He is a person who wants to serve our country, and we very much appreciate that. He has a distinguished career in public service, and we appreciate his willingness to continue to serve at the national level.

My reason for opposing his nomination is that he has opposed most of the missions of the Environmental Protection Agency as the attorney general of Oklahoma. He has filed numerous lawsuits that would compromise the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect our environment.

I come to this debate acknowledging that there are national responsibilities to protect our environment. The United States must also be engaged in global leadership as it relates to our environment. The people of Maryland want clean air. The people of Maryland want clean water. No State can guarantee to its citizens that its air will be clean or that its water will be safe. These issues go well beyond State boundaries. They go beyond national boundaries. It is for that reason that we need an Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency who will lead our Nation both in the appropriate controls and regulations to protect our air and water but also work for our country in regard to the global efforts to protect our environment for future generations.

Let me talk about the issue of climate change. Climate change is one of the greatest threats of our times. We know that this year, according to NASA—they looked at the temperature rise in 2016 and found it to be the hottest year ever recorded. We know something is happening in regard to global climate change. It is affecting so many different areas. We have eroding shorelines that our constituents see. We have major military installations located along our coast that are at risk as a result of rising sea levels from ice melt. We have populations that are at risk in the United States.

Let me give one example, if I might. Smith Island, MD, is a very proud community. It is a community that historically has been one of the strongest in regard to watermen and dealing with the fruits of the Chesapeake Bay. It is a proud community, and it is in danger of disappearing because we have sea level rises resulting from ice melting from climate change. We know there is a problem developing that we need to deal with. It is affecting our economy.

In my State of Maryland, the seafood industry is concerned about the future of the blue crab crop. They know that juvenile crabs need sea grass in order to be able to be protected and mature into full-blown blue crabs. With water becoming warmer, the future of sea grass is challenged, putting the blue crab at risk.

That is just one example. There are many more examples I can give about how it is affecting the economy of my State. It is affecting our ability to enjoy our environment, the recreation itself, and it is certainly providing a real risk in regard to the real estate. We have some very nice real estate located right on the coast or on barrier islands that is at risk of being lost as a result of climate change. We see more and more major weather events occur on a much more regular basis, causing billions of dollars of damage and putting lives at risk.

We know climate change is here. It is happening. The science is pretty clear. When we asked Attorney General Pruitt his view about the science of climate change, his answer was ''far from settled.''

The science is well understood. What we do here on Earth—the release of carbon emissions—is causing an abnormal warming of our climate. There are activities that we can do to reduce that effect on our climate. We know that. That is what science tells us. We know we can affect the adverse impacts of climate change if we take action. That is what scientists are telling us.

The world came together on this issue in COP21. I was proud to head a delegation of 10 Members of the U.S. Senate as we went to Paris to make it clear to the international community that the United States wanted to be part of a global solution to climate change. Not any one country can reverse the trendline that we are on that is catastrophic; we need all nations to do everything they can to reduce the impact of climate change by reducing their carbon and greenhouse emissions. That is what the global community needs to do, but we have been unable to get the global community for all countries to live up to their responsibilities.

Under President Obama and our leadership, we were able to get the world community—over 190 nations—to come together in Paris, in COP21, for every nation to take responsibility to reduce their carbon emissions so that we all can benefit from that effort.

I am concerned as to whether Mr. Pruitt, if confirmed as the EPA Administrator, will continue that U.S. leadership. He has not been at all committed to U.S. programs on dealing with climate change, let alone our international responsibilities to lead other countries to do what they need to do. I will give one example. Part of our way of showing the international community that we are serious about the climate issue was the powerplant rule issued under the Obama administration. Attorney General Pruitt joined a group in opposing that powerplant rule through filing suit against the implementation of that particular law.

We need someone who is going to lead on this effort in America and understand that we have responsibilities to lead the international community. We are at great risk from the impact of climate change, and that needs to be understood and recognized by the leader of the Environmental Protection Agency. I am not convinced Attorney General Pruitt would do that.

I want to talk a little bit about clean air. Maryland has taken pretty aggressive steps to improve the air quality from emissions within the geographical boundary of the State of Maryland. That is what every State should do. But here is the challenge: Maryland is downwind from many other States' emissions, so we are seeing days in which our air quality is below what it should be, not because we haven't taken action but because we don't have a national policy to protect our clean air.

The health of Marylanders depends on the Federal Government being aggressive in guaranteeing that all citizens of this country—that steps are taken to protect the air they breathe. I can tell you the number of children who have asthma who suffer when the air quality is not what it should be. It is not only wrong from the point of

view that we have an obligation to our children to make sure we give them the healthiest air to breathe, it is also costing our economy because every day that child stays home, a parent cannot go to work. The child loses their time in school; they are being disadvantaged. If they have to take a day off from summer camp, the parent has to stay home, and it is wasting resources in this country.

For many reasons, we need an Administrator of the EPA who is committed to a national effort to make sure the air we breathe is clean and healthy.

Likewise with clean water. Some of us remember when the Cuyahoga River caught fire in 1969. We know that pollution was so bad, you literally could set our rivers afire. We took steps. And it was not partisan—Democrats and Republicans came together with the Clean Water Act. We recognized that the Federal Government has the responsibility to protect the quality of our water so that we have safe, clean water in America.

I think we have been working to improve the Clean Water Act consistently on a nonpartisan basis, but now we have Supreme Court decisions that challenge what water the Federal Government can regulate. Congress has not taken steps to clarify that. The administration took efforts to try to clarify that under the waters of the United States, only to see a Court action to put that on hold in which Mr. Pruitt joined as the attorney general of Oklahoma, once again slowing down our effort to protect the clean waters of America.

I have spoken numerous times on the floor of the Congress about the Chesapeake Bay and how proud I am to be a Senator from Maryland, one of the six States that are in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, along with the District of Columbia.

We know that the Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure. It has been so designated by many Presidents of the United States. It is the latest estuary in our hemisphere. The watershed contains 64,000 square miles, has over 11,000 miles of shoreline, and 17 million people live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed—150 major rivers, $1 trillion to our economy. It is part of the heritage of my State and our region. We are proud that it is part of our life. It is part of why people like to live in this region. They know the Chesapeake Bay makes their life so much more enriched and so much more valuable.

The Chesapeake Bay is in trouble. I could talk about it from a technical point of view. It doesn't flush itself as quickly as other water bodies. The historic oyster population is not what it has been. We have to, therefore, make special efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Over 30 years ago, almost 40 years now, while I was in the State legislature, when I was speaker of the house, I worked with Governor Harry Hughes, and we developed a State program to deal with the Chesapeake Bay.

We did it the right way. We started at the local levels. We got all the stakeholders together: the farmers, the developers, the local governments, the private sector, our local governments, the State government. We worked with Pennsylvania because Pennsylvania is where the Susquehanna River flows, and that produces most of the fresh water that goes into the Chesapeake Bay. We worked with Delaware, Virginia, New York, and West Virginia, and we developed the Chesapeake Bay Program that is worked from the local level up. We get together to determine what is reasonable: What does science tell us we can do?

We have all the stakeholders sitting around the table as we develop these plans. They all sign up. Our farmers recognize that clean water will make their agriculture more profitable. They recognize that. Developers understand that we need a clean Chesapeake Bay as part of our ability to develop profitable real estate in our community. These are not inconsistent. A serene environment, clean agriculture, a strong agriculture, a strong economy are all hand in hand together.

It is not a choice between one or the other. We recognize that. That is why the Chesapeake Bay Program has never been partisan in Maryland. We have had Democratic and Republican Governors who supported the Chesapeake Bay Program. We have had legislators lead this effort from both parties. Senator Mac Mathias, who served as the U.S. Senator from Maryland, was the champion of bringing the Federal Government into the Chesapeake Bay Program. The program is working. It is making the bay safer today, but we still have a long way to go.

We enforce it through the TMDL, the Total Maximum Daily Loads, so we can monitor that we are making the progress we said we could make, based upon best science. And that is what the local stakeholders have signed up for.

When we did our TMDL's, it was challenged. It was challenged in the courts. Mr. Pruitt was one of those who brought a challenge against the TMDL Program in Maryland. I am thankful that the Third Circuit upheld the legal right of the TMDL, and the Supreme Court affirmed that decision by the Third Circuit. So we won the legal case.

But it troubles me that a program that is from the ground up, from the local governments up, in which the Federal government is a partner—why it would be challenged when it was supported by the local communities. To me, that case should never have been challenged.

We need the Federal Government to continue to participate with us. The Chesapeake Bay Program is supported through the farm bill, through the Water Resources Development Act, through the Clean Water Act, and through annual appropriations. So we need continued support at the Federal level for the Chesapeake Bay Program. And we need a champion in the Environmental Protection Agency that will help us in that regard.

I want to talk briefly about the Safe Drinking Water Act. Safe drinking water is critically important. We know that in recent years, we have found too much lead in drinking water. We all know, of course, the story of Flint, MI. I could take you to Baltimore where our schools have to cut off their water fountains because of the unsafe levels of lead in the drinking water, if they were permitted to drink from the water fountains.

We can tell you about so many communities in the Nation that have a desperate need to clean up their safe drinking water so that we can protect our children from lead poisoning. I hope my colleagues understand that there is no safe level of lead in the blood. It robs children of their future. It poisons them. I think most people are familiar with the Freddie Gray tragedy in Baltimore. Freddie Gray was a victim of lead poisoning when he was young.

We owe it to our children to make sure we do everything we can so they are not exposed to lead. I asked questions about that during the confirmation hearing of Mr. Pruitt. The answers were less than acceptable and showed his lack of real information about the dangers of lead.

Every Congress should look at their responsibility to build on the record, to leave a cleaner and safer environment for the next generation. The EPA Administrator should be committed to that goal. I do not believe Mr. Pruitt will be that type of leader. For that reason, I will vote against his confirmation.

With that, 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.

IMMIGRATION

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. President, I rise today, humbled to offer my first official speech as the junior U.S. Senator from the great State of California. I rise with a deep sense of reverence for this institution, for its history, and for its unique role as the defender of our Nation's ideals.

Above all, I rise today with a sense of gratitude for all those upon whose shoulders we stand. For me, it starts with my mother Shyamala Harris. She arrived at the University of California, Berkeley, from India in 1959 with dreams of becoming a scientist. The plan, when she finished school, was to go back home to a traditional Indian marriage. But when she met my father Donald Harris, she made a different plan. She went against a practice reaching back thousands of years, and

instead of an arranged marriage, she chose a love marriage. This act of self-determination made my sister Maya and me, and it made us Americans, like millions of children of immigrants before and since.

I know she is looking down on us today, and knowing my mother, she is probably saying: Kamala, what on Earth is going on down there? We have to stand up for our values.

So in the spirit of my mother, who was always direct, I cannot mince words. In the early weeks of this administration, we have seen an unprecedented series of Executive actions that have hit our immigrant and religious communities like a cold front, striking a chilling fear in the hearts of millions of good, hard-working people, all by Executive fiat.

By fiat, we have seen the President stick taxpayers with a bill for a multi-billion-dollar border wall, without regard to the role of the U.S. Congress under article 1 of the Constitution. By fiat, we have seen a President mandate the detention of immigrants, both documented and undocumented, creating a dragnet that could ensnare 8 million people. By fiat, the President has ordered the creation of what essentially will be a 15,000-member deportation force. By fiat, he wants to take away State and local authority by making local police officers act as Federal immigration officials. By fiat, the President wants to slam the gates of freedom by instituting a Muslim ban—a ban which was as carelessly written as it has been incompetently enforced.

In recent days, we have seen an increased severity in immigration raids sweeping across this country, including the arrest of a DREAMer in Seattle and a domestic violence victim in Texas. And we have seen an administration violate court orders, attack the First Amendment, bully Federal judges, and mock Americans exercising their right to freely assemble.

I rise today to discuss how these actions impact my State of California and our country. In particular, the State of California, I believe, is a microcosm of who we are as America. In California, we have farmers and environmentalists, welders and technologists, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and the largest number of immigrants, documented and undocumented, of any State in the Nation.

I rise because the President's actions have created deep uncertainty and pain for our refugee and immigrant communities. I rise on behalf of California's more than 250,000 DREAMers, who were told by the Federal Government: If you sign up, we will not use your personal information against you. I rise to say the United States of America cannot go back on our promise to these kids and their families.

I rise today as a lifelong prosecutor and as the former top cop of the biggest State in this country to say that these Executive actions present a real threat to our public safety. Let me repeat that: The President's immigration actions and Muslim ban will make America less safe.

As a prosecutor, I can tell you it is a serious mistake to conflate criminal justice policy with immigration policy, as if they are the same thing. They are not. I have personally prosecuted everything from low-level offenses to homicides. I know what a crime looks like, and I will tell you, an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal. But that is what these actions do; they suggest all immigrants are criminals and treat immigrants like criminals.

There is no question, those who commit crimes must face severe and serious and swift consequence and accountability. But the truth is, the vast majority of the immigrants in this country are hard-working people who deserve a pathway to citizenship.

Instead of making us safer, these increased raids and Executive orders instill fear in immigrants who are terrified they will be deported or have to give up information resulting in the deportation of their family members. For this reason, studies have shown Latinos are more than 40 percent less likely to call 9–1-1 when they have been a victim of crime. This climate of fear drives people underground and into the shadows, making them less likely to report crimes against themselves or others—fewer victims reporting crime and fewer witnesses coming forward.

These Executive actions create a strain on local law enforcement. Any police chief in this country will tell you that they barely have enough resources to get their job done. So when you make local law enforcement do the job of the Federal Government, you strain the resources for local law enforcement and that hurts everybody's safety.

Let's consider the economic harm this order will cause. Immigrants make up 10 percent of California's workforce and contribute $130 billion to our State's gross domestic product. Immigrants own small businesses, they till the land, they care for children and the elderly, they work in our labs, they attend our universities, and they serve in our military. So these actions are not only cruel, but they cause ripple effects that harm our public safety and our economy.

The same is true of this Muslim ban. This ban may as well have been hatched in the basement headquarters of ISIS. We handed them a tool of recruitment to use against us. Policies that demonize entire groups of people based on the God they worship have a way of conjuring real-life demons. Policies that isolate our Muslim-American communities take away one of the greatest weapons we have in the fight against homegrown extremism.

Here is the truth. Imperfect though we may be, I believe we are a great country. I believe we are a great country. Part of what makes us great are our democratic institutions that protect our fundamental ideals: freedom of religion and the rule of law, protection from discrimination based on national origin, freedom of the press, and a 200-year history as a nation built by immigrants.

So this brings me to my message today. We have a responsibility to draw a line with these administrative actions and say no. This is not a question of party. This is about the government of coequal branches, with its inherent checks and balances. This is about the role of the Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the world. I know, having spent now a few weeks in this Chamber, that we have good men and women on both sides of the aisle—men and women who believe deeply in our immigrant communities and who understand that nationalism and patriotism are not the same thing.

I know that it was the junior Senator from the State of Texas who said: ''It is an enormous blessing to be the child of an immigrant who fled oppression, because you realize how fragile liberty is and how easily it can be taken away.''

It was the junior Senator from the great State of Kentucky who said: ''We must always embrace individual liberty and enforce the constitutional rights of all Americans, rich and poor, immigrants and natives, black and white.''

It was the senior Senator from the great State of Arizona who said: Undocumented immigrants should not be ''condemned forever'' to a twilight status.

So, yes, we have good people on both sides of the aisle. I say that we must measure up to our words and fight for our ideals because the critical hour is upon us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma

CONGRATULATING SENATOR HARRIS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, let me say that that was an excellent presentation by Senator HARRIS. I can recall when she first came here, and I sat down with her and we talked about her predecessor and about how people with diverse philosophies can get along and actually love each other.

I would expect the same thing to happen in this case—because it does. I listened to some of the things that were said by the new Senator from California, talking about the rule of law, about freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and the First Amendment. I agree. I am hoping that we end up with more things in common than things that would keep us apart because we have a lot to do. We need to get busy doing it. I appreciate very much hearing the opening speech by Senator Harris.

Mr. President, I wanted to get to the floor because it won't be long until we will be voting on my Oklahoma attorney general, Scott Pruitt. I am looking forward to it. He and I go back a long way. I know that he has been through the ringer, as a lot of them have. I look

at Jeff Sessions and some of the abusive things that were said about him during the time that he was going through this process. Of course, the same thing has been true with Scott Pruitt.

Scott Pruitt just happens to be not only a candidate who is going to make an excellent Administrator of the EPA, but he is also one who knows the job. He has been there. He has been attorney general for Oklahoma, my State. He lives in my home town of Tulsa, OK. So I know him quite well. In fact, I am in aviation, and I remember flying him around the State in some areas, introducing him when he was just starting out in the statewide race.

I think he is going to do a really good job. It is my understanding that my colleagues on the other side are determined to run the clock before we vote on Attorney General Pruitt, and they are using the opportunity to make the case that he will destroy the environment and return pollution to the air and water.

Yet they know that he will do nothing of the sort. Attorney General Pruitt is highly qualified. Yes, it is true that he has had the occasion to file lawsuits on behalf of the State of Oklahoma against the Environmental Protection Agency. I can assure you that he knows that he has represented the State of Oklahoma. There are many other States that were doing the same thing.

He is a believer in the rule of law and will uphold the laws as passed by Congress within constitutional bounds. He has built a career defending the law, and I see no cause for concern that he will ever stop. He has been practicing law in Oklahoma since 1993, when he graduated from law school at the University of Tulsa. In 1998, he ran and was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate, where he served for 6 years. During that time in the Oklahoma State Senate, he was seen as a leader, someone who could be counted upon, and someone who should be in higher office in the State.

Of course, that is what happened. Since 2010, he has been the Attorney General for Oklahoma. He became a respected defender of the State's role in our Federal system of government. As EPA Administrator, Pruitt will continue to uphold core constitutional principles and won't be engaged in the same Federal overreach that we have seen over the last 8 years.

I know there are varying philosophies in this body. I know there are people who want to concentrate the power in Washington. They see nothing wrong with what we refer to as governmental overreach. I have experienced this because it happens that I was the chairman, as well as the ranking member, of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which has the jurisdiction over the Environmental Protection Agency. So I have watched this take place.

I know that there are members of the Environment and Public Works Committee who have differing philosophies as to what the EPA should be doing. They see outsiders. They see the State, sometimes, as someone who is opposed to the things they are trying to do. But we have watched this happen over the last 8 years.

Attorney General Pruitt has said again and again that he will uphold the laws that we pass right here in Congress—no more and no less. So it is up to us as lawmakers to provide him with effective bipartisan legislation that will make a positive difference for the environment and for our future, while balancing State and private interests. This balance is possible and Scott Pruitt is a testament to this balance.

Oklahoma is an energy State. Oklahoma is an agricultural State. We care a great deal about the land we live on and the air we breathe, and we want to be sure it is safe for our families and for generations to come. I think about the Administrator that was there during the years of the Obama administration, and he was actually in a hearing just a few hours ago. He talked about how comforting it was to come to our State of Oklahoma—which he did twice. He learned that landowners are on the side of the environment. They are the ones who want to care for the land. They are the ones who want to exert whatever energies are necessary to take care of the problems with pollution that are present in this world.

As attorney general, Mr. Pruitt has worked closely with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to protect Oklahoma's scenic rivers from upstream pollution. As a matter of fact, as to his reputation, he is ''Mr. Scenic Rivers'' back in Oklahoma. I don't understand how people concerned with the environment are opposing him and saying things about him that are detrimental.

He was able to use unbiased logic and science to reach an agreement with the State of Arkansas to protect our water in Oklahoma. He has also been instrumental in negotiating a historic water settlement agreement. This agreement was between the State of Oklahoma, the Choctaw Nation, and the Chickasaw Nation.

This thing, I say to the Presiding Officer, has been in litigation for 100 years. He walked in, and he resolved the problem. It was a battle that had gone on for 100 years. One of the chief concerns of the Chickasaw and the Choctaw Nations was to ensure that conservation guidelines were preserved. The agreement not only provides Oklahoma City with its long-term water needs but also protects our two Indian nations with their conservation goals. Again, this was tried by a lot of people over a period of 100 years until Scott Pruitt came along. He is the one who did it.

He has sued the EPA and fought against the Fish and Wildlife Service at times. It has all been in Oklahoma's best interest. Now he will have the entire Nation's best interest in mind when making decisions as the EPA Administrator. I have no doubt that he will continue to protect our State's interests from overreach and unnecessary harmful regulations.

It is no secret that Attorney General Pruitt's confirmation process has been unusually lengthy. It is time we vote to confirm him in this position. We had his nomination hearing in the Environment and Public Works Committee. That was back on January 18, almost a month ago. That hearing was one to be remembered because we broke a record by asking 4 rounds of questions. I suggest that no one in this confirmation process this year or in the last three generations has had to undergo four rounds of questions.

During the course of this day-long, 8-hour hearing, he answered more than 200 questions. Now, after this, he responded to more than 1,000 questions for the record, including the extra questions Senator CARPER asked him in a December 28 letter, as Attorney General Pruitt promised he would.

Now, this means that he answered—these are questions for the record—1,600 questions. The average director, during confirmation over the last 3 Presidential years, had 200. So it is 200 questions, as opposed to 1,600 questions that he was subjected to. He never complained about it and actually did a great job.

Now, despite the Democrats' efforts to delay his confirmation vote, we need to be responsible and move forward to confirm Attorney General Pruitt. The longer we postpone this vote, the longer it is going to take for things to get done at the EPA. Right now nothing can get done. Everyone knows that. That is wrong. I know that Attorney General Pruitt will continue to be a champion for economic development and environmental responsibility by upholding the law and restoring the Environmental Protection Agency to its role as a regulatory agency, not an activist organization.

You know, this is all for show because everybody knows the votes are there. He is going to be approved. I look forward to working with him. I think he is ready now to move in and do the job. It is going to be a while before he is able to get the other positions confirmed. That is why it is important to go ahead and do it, and I understand we are going to be doing it when this time runs out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I yield the remaining time I have to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the nomination of Scott Pruitt to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. The Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, is tasked with

protecting human health and the environment, including our precious air, land, and water. This is clearly one of the most critical missions in the Federal Government.

Americans believe that a great country deserves safe drinking water, clean air, and to know that the products we use are safe. And Americans care about continuing this legacy for future generations, believing that we should leave the environment in good shape or better than we found it, and that is where the EPA comes in.

Before the Agency was created in 1970, a hodgepodge of inconsistent State and city regulations proved to be inadequate for protecting the right of Americans to have a clean, safe environment. Before the EPA, in some cities in this country, the air was so polluted that during the day, drivers could barely see the car in front of them. Studies indicate that the air in the 1950s in Los Angeles, as measured by particulate matter and ozone pollution, was worse than it is in Beijing today. Our rivers, including the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, caught fire. Schools were built on toxic chemical dumps. I know the thought of public health risks like these sound preposterous today, but this was all the case back before the EPA. It took parents and regular citizens standing up and demanding better to finally force action. In 1970, President Richard Nixon and a Democratic Congress worked in a bipartisan manner to create the EPA.

Let me be clear. The EPA is not perfect. There are many instances when I have stood up to the Agency because I felt its actions were not in the best interests of Minnesotans. That said, since the creation of the Agency, the EPA has significantly improved our public health and our environment by cleaning up our air and cleaning up our water.

We still have a lot of work left to do. Yet we are now faced with a President and an EPA nominee who want to gut the Agency and reverse the progress we have made. President Trump has repeatedly attacked environmental protections and the EPA. He has called to ''get rid of'' the Agency. And during an interview with FOX News, Candidate Trump said of the EPA: ''What they do is a disgrace.'' And now he is in a position to try to implement his stated goal of gutting the EPA—gutting the EPA, that is right. He wants to slash critical public health and environmental safeguards, and to do this, he handpicked Mr. Pruitt.

Mr. Pruitt intends to prevent the EPA from protecting public health and the environment by reducing the budget by two-thirds. Trump transition team member Myron Ebell made these plans clear. Mr. Pruitt will cut and then cut some more and then cut some more, until the Agency we trust to keep us safe is no bigger than it was when Richard Nixon was President.

So what exactly should we cut? Which aspect of public health and our environment is in need of less protection and research? Well, let me tell you about some of the things the EPA has accomplished since its creation.

The EPA helps protect us from toxins. From 1948 to 1988, 30 million homes were treated for termite infestation with two related, very longlasting chemicals: heptachlor and chlordane. These chemicals are among the 12 worst known persistent organic pollutants—a rogues' gallery called the dirty dozen. A long-term study found that millions of Americans have these chemicals in their blood and in their fat and that the higher the levels, the more likely a person is to suffer from dementia, type 2 diabetes, prostate cancer, testicular cancer, breast cancer, or lymphoma.

The problems arising from heptachlor and chlordane are still with us, but at least they are not getting worse. Why? Because hard work by EPA scientists helped expose the risks of these chemicals and led them to be banned in the United States in 1988. The world didn't catch up to the protection offered to the American people by our EPA until an international ban came into effect in 2001.

The Agency also determined that lead in our paint and lead in our gas caused terrible public health problems, and they got the lead out. In the 1970s, 88 percent of American children had elevated levels of lead in their blood. Now the number is less than 1 percent.

However, we know that the battle against old toxins is far from over, as the disastrous lead poisoning in Flint, MI, tragically reminds us. We also know that new risks appear every year. That is why Congress recently passed bipartisan legislation to allow the EPA to take action on the most concerning toxic chemicals, including asbestos. Slashing the EPA budget endangers future progress and will not make us better off, will not make us safer, will not make our children safer.

The EPA has also made our air cleaner. Thanks to the EPA, we have reduced air pollution—like smog and ozone and particulate matter—by more than 70 percent since 1970, thus preventing millions of asthma attacks, hospital visits, lost workdays, and more than 100,000 premature deaths every year. At the same time, the American economy has grown 240 percent.

The Agency was also instrumental in the phaseout of harmful substances responsible for depleting the ozone layer. The ozone layer shields us from harmful ultraviolet radiation that leads to sunburns or, worse, skin cancer. Thanks to the work of the EPA and other Federal agencies in cooperation with the international community, ozone depletion has now stopped and the layer has begun to regenerate.

The EPA has also made our water cleaner. The Agency invests billions in drinking and wastewater infrastructure every year through the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. These funds are particularly important to rural communities.

What is more, the EPA is actually saving consumers money. Take the fuel efficiency standards that require car companies to manufacture vehicles that go farther on a gallon of gas. These standards both reduce air pollution and save people money. Thanks in part to the EPA, from 1975 to 2013, the average fuel economy of a car sold in the United States more than doubled. Further increases in fuel economy standards under the Obama administration mean that if you buy a new car, you can expect to save an average of $7,300 on gas during the lifetime of that vehicle. As a whole, Americans will save $1.7 trillion at the pump.

This is just a small subset of what the EPA has accomplished over the years to protect public health and the environment. And I didn't even mention cleaning up toxic waste sites or testing foreign products for lead and mercury. But if Mr. Pruitt is confirmed to lead the EPA, all this progress and continued work is at risk.

As the attorney general of Oklahoma, Mr. Pruitt put the will of his corporate donors above the public interest time and time again, suing the Agency 18 times—suing the EPA 18 times—to block clean air and clean water protections. Now Mr. Pruitt wants to run the EPA, but he refuses to say that he will permanently recuse himself from those lawsuits that are still pending. Thus, he would be both the defendant and plaintiff in those cases. This is a bizarre world nomination. We cannot allow this type of conflict of interest at the EPA.

As attorney general, he failed to take environmental protections seriously. He dismantled the environmental protection unit within the AG's office, and in particular Mr. Pruitt's record shows a disdain for protecting the air we breathe. He filed three lawsuits to block EPA health standards for smog, soot, mercury, arsenic, lead, and other air pollutants. His actions directly threaten those who suffer from asthma and other lung conditions. We can't go back to the air we had in the 1970s. We can't afford the air Beijing has today.

Mr. Pruitt is so ideologically driven to protect the interests of oil, gas, and other polluters that he even gets in the way of clean energy projects that would create jobs. Take for example the Plains & Eastern Clean Line, a high-voltage transmission project that President Trump has identified as an infrastructure priority. It will bring clean wind power from the heartland to power-hungry cities. As Oklahoma attorney general, Mr. Pruitt did everything he could to kill that very same project.

Even more concerning to me is Mr. Pruitt's years of opposition to the renewable fuel standard, the RFS. This program is vital in our fight against dirty air, and it also greatly benefits Minnesota's rural economy. It is certainly better to drive our cars on

biofuels from the Midwest than on oil from the Middle East. I know that Mr. Pruitt pledged during his hearing to honor the RFS, but this same law provides him with an important loophole: The RFS permits the head of the EPA to reduce the congressionally mandated levels of biofuel production. I, for one, do not trust an avid opponent of the RFS to now be responsible for its implementation.

During the confirmation hearings, my Democratic colleagues pushed Mr. Pruitt on climate change. His answers were not reassuring. Unlike our new President, Mr. Pruitt did not call climate change a ''hoax.'' Instead, he was more subtle, repeatedly saying: ''The climate is changing, and human activity impacts are changing climate in some manner.'' Those words are intentionally deceptive. They are meant to sound reasonable but also to excuse inaction. If we look at Mr. Pruitt's record, it shows that he has been steadfastly against action on climate change, including a suit to block the first requirements for powerplants to reduce their carbon emissions. Let me remind you that these requirements are based on Supreme Court rulings from a conservative majority Court at that.

In a 2007 decision, Massachusetts v. the EPA, the Supreme Court found that the EPA had authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. It also directed the EPA to assess whether climate change endangers public health, which the Agency correctly determined it does. The Court further ruled that because of this hazard, the EPA is obligated to regulate greenhouse gases.

During his hearing, Mr. Pruitt made clear that all he wants to do is transfer more environmental protection duties to the States, but there are two major problems with that. First, 50 States each implementing different requirements is both inefficient and likely to lead to a race to the bottom. There are many States that will be tempted to trade away the long-term public health of their citizens for the quick financial rewards that will come if they are able to lure businesses from other States with the promise of lax environmental regulations.

All Americans deserve a clean environment. If States want to innovate, free them to do better than our national standards, but there needs to be an EPA that can make sure they don't do worse than our national standards.

While my State of Minnesota has been a leader in environmental protection, the second problem with the State-by-State approach is that pollution doesn't respect State boundaries. The people of my State should not suffer ill effects of pollution from States upwind.

Mr. Pruitt also implied during his hearing that the EPA's regulations are killing jobs, suggesting we must either choose employment and economic prosperity or public health and environmental protection, but this is a false choice. We know we can and must in fact have both. Addressing environmental challenges like climate change will not only help prevent unprecedented damage to our economy but will also spur economic growth and innovation.

My home State of Minnesota has shown how we can do this. In 2007, under a Republican Governor, we established a renewable energy standard that produced 25 percent of our power from renewable sources by 2025. We established an energy efficiency resource standard requiring utilities to become a little more efficient every year. We established an aggressive target to reduce greenhouse gases by 80 percent by 2050, and we are national leaders in biodiesel blending requirements. These policies have not led to economic ruin in Minnesota. They have led to economic development—rural economic development—as we harvest the wind and Sun and convert our biomass into energy. We are investing in clean energy technology not only because it cleans up the air but because it creates thousands of jobs. In fact, a clean energy economy now employs more than 50,000 people in Minnesota, and it will continue to grow.

In 2005, 6 percent of Minnesota's electricity came from renewable sources. Today it is almost 25 percent, and we continue to go higher. In addition to good jobs for Minnesotans, this transition brought a 17-percent decline in power sector greenhouse gas emissions during a decade when the population of Minnesota increased 7 percent. It is clear that an EPA led by Mr. Pruitt will not move us in the direction Minnesota is going.

Americans expect and deserve clean water, clean air, and a hospitable environment. Although EPA is far from perfect, the Agency has shown that a cleaner environment is compatible with economic growth. In fact, cleaning the environment helps drive economic growth. We cannot afford to entrust the EPA to Mr. Pruitt or anyone else who has a history of putting polluters' interests above the public's and above the economy as a whole. We cannot afford to entrust this Agency to someone the President has handpicked to slash its budget and to prevent it from carrying out its mission. Mr. Pruitt represents a step backward, not a step forward. He is maybe the last person who should be the next leader of the EPA. I will oppose this nomination, and I call on my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my postcloture debate time to Senator SCHUMER.

But first, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. 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. LEE. Mr. President, I am proud to stand today and support Scott Pruitt, President Trump's nominee to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

I can think of no one who is better suited or more fully qualified to lead this Agency and to advance within it the reforms it so desperately needs. I look forward to voting to confirm Mr. Pruitt as EPA Administrator, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

In many ways, the EPA epitomizes the broken status quo in Washington—a status quo that is increasingly and rightfully viewed with suspicion and a certain amount of contempt by the American people. That broken and discredited status quo has been described in various ways: out of touch, arbitrary, inflexible, unreasonable, heavy-handed, unaccountable. These words could apply to any number of institutions or offices here in Washington, DC, but they are the hallmarks of the rule-writing departments that make up our Federal bureaucracy.

Technically, these bureaucratic agencies are creatures of the executive branch—creatures that exist to assist the President in fulfilling his constitutional duty to take care that the laws, written by the legislative branch, are to be faithfully executed. But over the past several decades, they have been recast as the Federal Government's center of gravity, both writing and enforcing and, in many cases, even interpreting, the vast majority of laws governing America's society and America's economy.

Elevating the unelected, unaccountable bureaucracy to the driver's seat of the Federal Government—to the driver's seat, specifically, of Federal policymaking—is mostly the work of Members of Congress, of both Chambers and of both political parties, who understand that the best way to avoid being blamed by voters for unpopular laws is not to make them—at least not to make them completely—but rather to empower unelected bureaucrats to make the laws for them. But the regulatory agencies themselves sometimes deserve some of the blame as well.

Congress is guilty of writing laws that are couched in vague terms, centered around gauzy goals, instead of strictly defined as understandable rules. But Federal regulators are guilty of interpreting—and repeatedly reinterpreting—those laws in order to accommodate their ever-expanding conception of their own power, of their own authority to work their own will on the American people.

For instance, in the years since Congress passed the Clean Air Act amendments in 1977, Federal bureaucrats have used the law to enact more than 13,500 pages of regulations, which works out to roughly 30 pages of regulations for every 1 page of underlying legislative text.

The fundamental problem with this expansion and centralization of regulatory authority is the tendency of

Washington, DC, bureaucrats to be ignorant of—and often very indifferent to—the interests of the people who live in the various communities who are affected by the rules they make and the rules they also enforce.

This isn't a knock on the individual men and women who work within the Federal bureaucracy, most of whom are well-educated, well-intentioned, and highly specialized. But there is no doubt that a regulator in Washington, DC, knows a whole lot less about a melon farm in Emery County, UT, and cares a lot less about the fate of the people who work at that melon farm in Emery County, UT, than what the regulators say in Salt Lake City.

The Environmental Protection Agency, in particular, is notorious for its top-down, Washington-knows-best approach to regulation, which often runs roughshod over the immense diversity of local circumstances in our large country.

Too often, the EPA treats States and State regulators not as partners but as adversaries. It treats the States themselves not as laboratories of republican democracy but, rather, as lab rats to be tested upon for their own amusement and for the exertion of their own political power.

Scott Pruitt understands this well because he has seen it firsthand as attorney general of Oklahoma. Mr. Pruitt has spent many years being ignored and pushed around by Washington, an experience that has taught him the need for the EPA to work with and not condescend to the States.

In his Senate confirmation hearing, Mr. Pruitt explained why improving the relationship between the EPA and State-level regulators is the best way to protect our environment and uphold the separation of powers that is the cornerstone of our constitutional system. He said: ''Cooperative Federalism is at the heart of many of the environmental statutes that involve the Environmental Protection Agency.''

The reason for that is that it is the States that many times have the resources, the expertise, and an understanding of the unique challenges of protecting our environment and improving our water and our air. We need a true partnership between the EPA in performing its roll, along with the States in performing theirs. If we have that partnership, as opposed to punishment, as opposed to the uncertainty and duress that we currently see in the marketplace, I think we will have better air and better water quality as a result.

For many Americans—and certainly for many of my fellow Utahns—the EPA is pejorative. It is synonymous with an out-of-touch and out-of-control government.

This is a shame. Americans want—and Americans certainly deserve—clean air and clean water. The EPA has the potential to help them achieve these goals, but only if the EPA itself returns to its core mission and works well, works wisely to accomplish that mission, and works within our constitutional system.

That is why I am so pleased that Scott Pruitt is on his way to lead the EPA. The Agency exists to protect the American people, not advance the narrow agenda of some special interests while punishing others.

I am confident that Mr. Pruitt is the right man for the job and that he will remain independent while correcting the troubling course that the EPA has taken in recent decades.

I thank the Chair.

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

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

CALLING FOR A SPECIAL COUNSEL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we are in a day—in fact, yet another day—of fast-developing, dramatic events. The news today that LTG Michael Flynn, who served until recently as National Security Advisor, may be culpable of lying to the FBI and therefore prosecutable for a Federal criminal violation adds urgency to the need for a special independent counsel to investigate all of the events surrounding his conversation with the Russian Ambassador and who knew what about it when and what was done.

The severity of this potential constitutional crisis—and we are careening toward a constitutional crisis—makes it all the more necessary that we have an objective and independent investigation, that Attorney General Jeff Sessions recuse himself, and the White House guarantee that documents are preserved—as we have requested in a letter sent by Members of the Judiciary Committee, including myself—today.

The severity of this potential constitutional crisis cannot be exaggerated. Still we are in the early days of a new administration but already the turmoil and turbulence throw into question almost all of the proceedings here on other issues, urgent and important issues—whether infrastructure, trade policy, job creation, economic growth, all of the pressing issues of our day. They also raise potential conflicts of interest on the part of other officials before us now, including the nomination of Scott Pruitt. News that we have also learned very recently, in this day of fast-developing events, increases the importance of deliberate and thoughtful consideration of this nomination.

Just within the last hour, a judge in Oklahoma has ordered the release of thousands of emails sent by this nominee, Scott Pruitt, the attorney general of Oklahoma, relevant to his dealings with oil and gas interests in his State and elsewhere on relevant legislative and litigation issues. This development really requires a delay in this vote so we can review those emails and know what those conflicts of interest were, what they may continue to be, and whether his answers to our colleagues in his testimony at his confirmation hearing were completely accurate and truthful. We need to delve into those emails, know their contents, examine the contents, in fairness to him and in fairness to an administration that may be appointing for confirmation yet another official like General Flynn, who was forced to resign just days after his appointment.

The interests of the Trump administration, as well as this body, would be well served by delaying this vote so we can review those emails. I call upon the Republican leadership to delay this vote, give us a chance to review the emails, and give the American public a chance to understand how those emails reflect on the qualifications of Scott Pruitt and the potential conflicts of interest that may disqualify him from serving in this all-important role.

I am here to oppose the nomination of Scott Pruitt, but whether we oppose or approve of this nomination, we owe it to ourselves—I say to my colleagues—we owe it to the United States Senate to delay this vote so the potentially explosive material and contents of these emails can be fully considered. If we fail to delay, we are, in effect, potentially confirming a nominee who may be compelled to resign after his disqualifying conflicts of interest are exposed to public view. We have an obligation in advising and consenting to be as fully informed as possible. If there were no such emails, if there were no such court order, there might be an excuse for rushing to judgment as we are on track to do now. There is no excuse for a rush to confirmation. Our obligation to advise and consent implies also an obligation to review these emails as comprehensively and fully and fairly as possible before we make this decision.

The President has nominated Scott Pruitt as the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to serve a mission, which is to protect human health and safeguard the environment. Even before disclosure of these emails, which involve his contacts with oil and gas interests, he came before us as perhaps one of the least-qualified people in the United States of America to serve in this position. I don't make this statement lightly. It may sound like hyperbole or exaggeration, but the fact is, anyone who studies Scott Pruitt's record as attorney general of his State—and I served as attorney general of mine so I know his position pretty well—can see that his record is antithetical and hostile to the mission and purpose of this Agency.

He is a potential Administrator who will take office at a critical juncture for our planet. Sea levels continue to rise, long-established weather patterns

have begun shifting, and the average global temperature is rapidly approaching 2 centigrades Celsius above preindustrial levels. That is an increase which many climate scientists believe may be a point of no return—no return for the planet, no return for us, no return for generations to come. We are at a historic moment.

The question will be whether Scott Pruitt will be dedicated to doing something about climate change, about the pollution of our air, streams, rivers, and oceans, whether he will be committed to enforcing the rules and laws that protect us against those dangers of degradation of our environment—degradation of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the open spaces we enjoy.

That is the same Scott Pruitt who was pressed by our colleagues during his confirmation hearing and could not name a single regulation designed to protect clean air or water that he supports—the very same Scott Pruitt, who was asked by our colleague JEFF MERKLEY whether he agreed with the statement, ''Warming of the climate system is unequivocal,'' and he dodged and equivocated. When he was questioned about hundreds of thousands of dollars he has received in campaign contributions from energy companies, he basically refused to answer. He dodged the question. That is the Scott Pruitt who would become Administrator of the EPA, and it is the same Scott Pruitt who, as attorney general of Oklahoma, fought the tremendous progress made by the Obama administration at every turn, taking legal action against the EPA no fewer than 14 times.

While he was in office, he worked hand in hand with Oklahoma's largest energy companies to roll back regulations that are vital to the health and well-being of the American people, not just the people of Oklahoma, as bad as that would be, but of all Americans, all of our plant.

When he worked hand in hand with the Oklahoma energy industry, those common bonds of purpose and work would be well illuminated by these emails that today will be disclosed. In fact, maybe some of those conflicts of interest will be revealed and dramatized by those emails. That is why we must wait to have this confirmation vote.

He sued to try and block efforts to reduce nationwide emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas roughly 30 times more effective at trapping even carbon dioxide. He block the Clean Power Plan. He took three separate actions against the EPA's mercury and air toxic rule, targeting standards that the EPA estimates will save 45,000 lives. Those are three more actions, it should be noted, than he took to proactively promote clean air and clean water on behalf of the people of Oklahoma in his entire time in office. Why did he take those actions? Who helped him do it? How and why? The emails will help tell that story and answer those questions.

Taken alone, even without the emails, these actions hardly show a record of someone dedicated to promoting and protecting the environment. Not once during his confirmation process did Mr. Pruitt demonstrate to me a convincing willingness, let alone eagerness, to uphold the mission of the Agency he now hopes to run, nor has he shown an intent to be open and responsive with Members of this body. Most troubling of all, he has, in no uncertain terms, failed to give any indication that he will be a champion for our environment and that he will advance scientifically sound policies to protect the public's health.

The only thing Attorney General Pruitt has made abundantly clear is that he holds a derisively dismissive attitude toward the Agency he now seeks confirmation to lead. His nomination is an affront to the EPA, but even more, it is a threat to our health, a threat to our environment, a threat to the quality of our air and water, and a risky gamble on the world we will leave to our children and our grandchildren.

There is a very real concern about whose side Scott Pruitt will be on. The question is, Whose side will he be on when and if he is Administrator of the EPA? He has already shown a willingness to use the power of whatever office he holds to advance an extreme agenda and to malign opponents. Polluters do not need another champion in this administration, and our environment does not need another foe. We have enough foxes guarding henhouses as it is in this administration.

Mr. Pruitt's coziness with the firms that he will be required to regulate—again the emails will tell the story about his relationships with special interests. That is critically important, and, in fact, even on the record we have now, it should disqualify him from this position.

He doubts the effects of climate change and the extent to which our rapidly warming climate is as a result of human activity, calling this debate ''far from settled'' and placing himself well outside mainstream opinion. His denials are rooted in the promise of funds from corporations and interest groups that think it is far better for their bottom line to pretend that incontrovertible climate change simply doesn't exist.

He is a beneficiary of the denying corporations and special interests, and those contentions are not only regressive and fallacious but dangerous. If he is a prisoner of those special interests, as these emails may show him to be, my colleagues will regret voting for him—another reason that delaying his confirmation vote is appropriate and necessary now.

The scientific evidence of climate change and human involvement is overwhelming. You don't have to look hard to see it. Most of us in this Chamber would need to speak only with a handful of our constituents—the men and women who sent us here—to see the real impact this crisis is having.

My home State of Connecticut has experienced a major rise in storms that have cost hundreds of millions of dollars in damage as well as several lives. It seems that as soon as our State begins to rebuild from one storm, another wreaks havoc on many of the same devastated communities. These monster storms have become the new normal.

In Connecticut and around the country, weather disasters are rapidly becoming part of a way of life, tragically, for innocent people caught in their wake. In just 6 years, Connecticut has weathered the damage and destruction of a freak October snowstorm, Superstorm Sandy, and the force of numerous nor'easters. Severe storms like these, as well as other disasters—floods, tornadoes, droughts—are happening at a rate four times greater than just 30 years ago.

I am not here to argue climate change. I am here to argue that Scott Pruitt is unqualified to fight climate change because he denies it is a problem, and he denies the mission and purpose of the EPA as a vital purpose and mission of our Federal Government.

The people of Connecticut understand climate change, and they get it. They understand that it is happening and that it is happening in their everyday lives. They see its effects. They know its causes, and they know the truth. It will get worse. We need to take action.

This body is on the verge of action that should be postponed so that we can consider vitally important information in those emails that reflects on conflicts of interest, ties to special interests, influence on Scott Pruitt, benefits to him in the past, and debts that he may owe, literally and figuratively, to those special interests that may impact his performance as Administrator of the EPA.

As attorney general of my State, environmental protection was a priority to me. I will be honest; I sued the Federal Government, just as Scott Pruitt did. I sued the Federal Government so that environmental protection would be made more rigorous and stringent and people would be protected, not to slow down the EPA but to speed it up to provide impetus for its action and, in fact, to compel it to carry out its mission and purpose.

Scott Pruitt has acted in exactly the opposite way, and the reasons for his antipathy and hostility to the EPA may well be illustrated even more dramatically and directly by these emails that we should consider.

I urge the Republican leadership to postpone and delay this vote so that we may, in fact, consider those emails.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I want to first thank Senator CARPER for his leadership today, and I rise today

to join him in speaking about the nomination of Scott Pruitt to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

I will not be voting in favor of Mr. Pruitt's nomination for EPA Administrator because of his record and views on issues that are very important to the people of my State—issues like climate change, which matters in Minnesota, and issues like the Renewable Fuel Standard. I am not sure everyone has focused on that today, but I think it is important, especially for States in the Midwest, to focus on what his record has been on this issue.

Mr. Pruitt has written that the climate change debate is ''far from settled'' and has made other troubling comments about climate change. I could not disagree more. I believe that the debate on whether climate change is happening is over. The facts are in, and the science is clear.

The ''2014 National Climate Assessment'' stated the most recent decade was the Nation's warmest on record. U.S. temperatures are expected to continue to rise. It was drafted by over 300 authors and extensively reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences and a Federal advisory committee of 60 members.

The ''Quadrennial Defense Review 2014'' of the Department of Defense of the United States stated: ''The pressures caused by climate change will influence resource competition while placing additional burdens on economies, societies, and governance institutions around the world.''

Climate change isn't just about melting glaciers and rising ocean levels, although it is certainly about that. It is also about what we have experienced in the Midwest. When I first got to the Senate, I remember hearing from experts, including people in our own Defense Department and major military leaders who talked about the fact that one of the consequences of climate change will be, first of all, all over the world in economies that are already struggling. We are going to see some of those developing nations encounter unpredictable weather—hurricanes, tsunamis.

In the Midwest, while we may not have tsunamis, what we see is major, unpredictable weather, which is just as dangerous. We have seen the devastating impacts of natural disasters like Hurricane Matthew, and we have seen flooding from Cedar Rapids and Duluth.

We now know the risk of climate change to Minnesota, to our country, and to our planet. We must reduce greenhouse gas and tackle the challenge of global climate change head-on. If we don't tackle this issue, we are going to continue to struggle with the far-reaching economic and environmental consequences.

Shifting global trends have the potential to wreak more long-term havoc on our businesses and our industries. That is why businesses in my State—major companies like Cargill and General Mills—have been willing to take this on, have been willing to talk about this as a problem. They see this as a moral obligation to their employees and their customers, but they also see it as part of their business. They can't simply continue in business and serve people all over the world if major economies could be ruined by one storm or if we see areas flooded that are on our coast or the kind of weather we have seen in the Midwest. It is bad for business, and they are willing to admit that.

As a Senator from Minnesota with a strong ag industry and also a tradition of hunting and fishing, I see climate change as a direct threat to my State's economy for recreation. It is also a threat to our State's heritage of enjoying the outdoors, whether that is snowmobiling or whether that is our wildlife. We have seen some major changes to the wildlife in our State.

I have always believed that an ''all of the above'' plan is necessary to build a new energy agenda for America, but it must be an agenda that recognizes the challenges of climate change. Someone who heads up the EPA must believe in science. It is an Agency grounded in science.

Mr. Pruitt has also been quoted as saying ''the ethanol fuel mandate is unworkable.'' I know he has changed some of his views since he was nominated, but I, as a Senator from a State that relies on renewable fuels as one of our major industries in the ag part of our State, must look at his entire record and what he has actually said when he has been in positions of power.

How do I see the Renewable Fuel Standard? The Renewable Fuel Standard has led to important advancements in clean energy, and the standard has provided stability and predictability that have and will continue to drive long-term investments in the renewable space.

Every time a new study is released on the subject, I become even more convinced that investments in renewable fuels are investments in the future health of our economy and our environment. A recent study by ABF Economics showed that the ethanol industry generated $7.37 billion in gross sales in 2015 for Minnesota businesses and $1.6 billion in income for Minnesota households. Here is a big one: The ethanol industry also supports over 18,000 full-time jobs in Minnesota.

Senators on both sides of the aisle understand that renewable fuels are important as a home-grown economic generator. They also are about 10 percent of our fuel supply in the United States. That is a competitor for oil. When we have that kind of competition, that allows us to have everything from electric cars to other kinds of renewables, and we should not simply rely on the oil industry to fuel our vehicles. Renewable fuels are an important competitor.

As I mentioned, there is strong bipartisan support for renewable fuels. I have worked closely with many friends across the aisle for many years on this issue. And, of course, the further ethanol and renewable fuels take us, the less dependent we will be on foreign oil. We need and want a mixed fuel supply.

Now is not the time to waiver on support for renewable fuels. The EPA Administrator has many flexibilities under the law to slow or make changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard, and that is why I am concerned about the past record of this nominee on this important issue.

Another reason we need consistent and effective leadership at the EPA is in the fight to maintain and restore the Great Lakes. Our Great Lakes contain 90 percent of our Nation's supply of fresh surface water and supply drinking water to 30 million Americans. And our economy? The Great Lakes' combined economic impact is so enormous that restoration alone is estimated to provide $50 billion in long-term economic benefits. That is why last year's Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act reauthorized the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. These projects have helped eliminate toxins from our waters, combat invasive species—something very critical in my State with invasive carp—protect against pollution, restore habitats for fish and wildlife, and promote the overall health.

The Administrator of the EPA is responsible for leading efforts to implement, administer, and distribute grant funding across agencies that undertake restoration activities. As I noted, Minnesota is home to a thriving outdoor economy that relies on clean water, free of invasive species. It is vital that our next EPA Administrator continue to take action to stop the spread of invasive carp before they reach the Great Lakes and many of our most important northern waters.

My background? My grandpa was an iron ore miner. He worked 1,500 feet underground in the mines most of his life. Every day when he went down in that cage, he would always think about what he would like to do in the outdoors. He loved to hunt. About once a year, they would borrow a car from my uncle. They would go to see Lake Superior, and he would bring his sons to see Lake Superior.

I want an EPA Administrator that sees that, yes, you want a strong economy, and yes, those things can work together with the environment, but you also need to preserve that outdoors and wildlife and those Great Lakes my grandpa and my family hold so dear.

Mr. Pruitt has articulated extreme views about the role of the EPA, but there is a bigger problem here. We still don't know his full views and record. My colleagues who sat on the Environment and Public Works Committee have asked Mr. Pruitt to produce critical documents that will clarify his record and vision for the EPA, and 19 times, Mr. Pruitt told Senators they should get the information from his attorney general's office. Well, they tried

and they have not succeeded. The Oklahoma attorney general's office told them that they have a 2-year backlog for such requests. In committee questions for the record, my colleagues asked Mr. Pruitt to clear the backlog and provide the committee with these communications. Once again, he declined. Mr. Pruitt has not provided the Senate with the information we need to make an informed decision about his nomination.

The EPA Administrator will be entrusted with protecting the health and well-being of Americans. This is a tremendous responsibility. That is why Americans deserve a clear picture of Mr. Pruitt's record on protecting public health, clean air, and clean water, including a review of the emails that were ordered to be released today.

RUSSIA

Now, Mr. President, I would like to turn to another topic. Actually, after watching parts of the President's lengthy and unpredictable news conference today, I came upon some of the parts dealing with Russia. I thought it was important that I come down to the floor and address them.

The part of the press conference that I saw was where the President referred to the reporting that has been done on Russia as fake news. The reporting that has been done about all of the contacts between members of his campaign and the Russian intelligence agencies—I assume he includes the reporting that has been done on the phone call that was made to the Russian Ambassador—and the various other reporting that we have seen—that is very troubling about this administration's dealing with Russia from the campaign time, to the transition, to the present.

I would just like to say that this is far from fake news; this is fact. And if you don't believe it is fact, then that means you don't believe 17 U.S. intelligence agencies and that instead you take the word of Russians, Russian intelligence and Putin's word. I go with our 17 U.S. intelligence agencies that have made it very clear that Russia had been attempting to influence our election.

This was borne out to me when Senator MCCAIN, Senator GRAHAM, and I visited the Baltics, Ukraine, and Georgia at the end of last year in December. What we saw there and what we heard there makes us know that this is not just one single incident of Russia trying to influence one candidate's campaign or even one election or even one country's election, but that this is a modus operandi, that they have done this before. They did it in Estonia when they were mad that they moved a statue. What did they do? They shut down their internet. They did it in Lithuania when the Lithuanians had the audacity to invite members of the Ukrainian Parliament who were in exile because they were part of the legally annexed Crimea. Lithuania invites them to their 25th anniversary celebration of their independence from Russia. What happens? Russia attacks the accounts of members of the Lithuanian Parliament.

I have already expressed deep concern about this administration's lack of transparency on a variety of critical issues, but nowhere is this more true than when it comes to this administration's interactions with the Russian Government. For months, U.S. intelligence agencies have said that Russia used covert cyber attacks, espionage, and harmful propaganda—$200 million worth—to try to undermine our democracy. Reports show it and the facts prove it.

Unlike what the President said today at the press conference, this is not fake news. Last week, in fact, we learned that the very day President Obama imposed sanctions on Russia for their unprecedented attacks on our democracy, a member of the Trump transition team spoke to a senior Russian official regarding those sanctions and then did not tell the truth about it. The National Security Advisor—the person charged with the most sensitive matters of U.S. national security—misled the Vice President and, in turn, the American people. We have now seen two people resign: the campaign manager for Trump's campaign and the National Security Advisor. And one of the things they have in common is Russia and a relationship with Russia.

So, no, this is not what the President said at his press conference today or earlier in a tweet. This is not about some kind of sour grapes—those were not his words but his implication about the loss of Hillary Clinton. That is not what this is. This is not about her loss in the last campaign. No. These are facts that have emerged since that time that I think are important to everyone.

I appreciated the words a few months ago from Senator RUBIO, who said that this is not about one campaign, this is not about one election, because it could quickly turn on the other party. We have an obligation as Senators to protect our democracy. That is what this is about—to make sure we have fair and free elections that are not influenced by foreign governments.

Today, Secretary Mattis said that Russia's behavior is aggressive and destabilizing. I thought that was a good caricature of not only what we have seen in our own country but also what we have seen overseas. And then he went on to say that right now we are not negotiating from a position of strength. Well, that is certainly true when our own President then, a few hours later, takes to the stage and says that this is simply fake news and that we are talking about Russia's aggression as some kind of response to the loss in the last campaign.

We need to know the full extent of the administration's contact with the Russian Government during the campaign and transition, including what was said, what was done, and who knew about it. Only then will we answer that fourth ''w.'' Who, what, where—it is the only way we are going to answer why. Why is this administration so focused on trying to placate Russia?

I recently joined Senators CARDIN, LEAHY, FEINSTEIN, and CARPER—this was early January—to introduce legislation that would create an independent, nonpartisan commission to look at the facts and to make recommendations about how we can handle future elections so they will be free and safeguarded from foreign interference. This would, of course, be in addition to the thorough investigation that I have been ensured will occur with the Intelligence Committee under the leadership of Senators BURR and WARNER.

In the last few weeks, we have heard a lot about the three branches of government and our system of checks and balances. One of the fundamental jobs of Congress is to closely oversee the executive branch to ensure that the law is being properly followed and enforced. I think my colleagues on both sides of the aisle understand how important that is.

I am the ranking member of the Senate Rules Committee, and one of our jobs is to oversee our election system. A big part of my job as the Democratic leader of this committee will be to ensure that our election system is safe from foreign interference in the future.

Intelligence experts have been clear: Russian interference in our 2016 election was not an anomaly. The threat of future tampering is real and immediate. As Senator RUBIO said and I just noted, this time it was the Democrats who were attacked. Next time it could be a Republican. And it is not something that is limited to one party. Future threats could come in the form of more misinformation. They could range from using social media to disrupt the voting process to even hacking into State reporting websites to alter vote totals. Russia's goal is to create confusion and undermine people's trust in our democratic institutions. That is why they spent $200 million last year to fund the spread of fake news.

We need solutions and not more problems. Just last week, the House voted to eliminate the Election Assistance Commission, the only Federal agency charged with protecting American elections from hacking. As ranking member of the Rules Committee, I find this unconscionable. We have to do more, not less, to protect American elections from foreign interference.

The EAC and the Department of Homeland Security were in communication with State election officials prior to election day promoting cyber security best practices. Our agencies have ensured that safeguards, like provisional ballots, would allow people to cast ballots even if their systems were hacked. We have to do more, not less, to support this effort. That is why I am currently developing legislation that

will protect our elections from foreign interference. We are going to work with the EAC, DHS, and all 50 States to protect voting systems and registration data bases from cyber security threats. We will also make sure State and local election officials have the resources they need to make these critical cyber security upgrades.

Recent news events show us just how severe the problem is. Now we have to come up with the solutions. My Republican colleague, Senator MCCAIN, got it right yesterday when he said this. This gets to the security issue that goes even beyond our elections:

> General Flynn's resignation also raises further questions about the Trump administration's intentions toward Vladimir Putin's Russia, including statements by the president suggesting moral equivalence between the United States and Russia despite its invasion of Ukraine, annexation of Crimea, and threats to our NATO allies.

The day that the Obama administration was imposing sanctions on Russia—and the Trump campaign was allegedly undermining those sanctions—I was with Senators MCCAIN and GRAHAM in Eastern Europe. The goal of our trip was to reenforce support for NATO and our allies in the face of increased Russian aggression. We visited the Baltics, Ukraine, and Georgia—countries on the frontlines of this fight, and they know Russia's playbook well.

In our meetings with Presidents and Prime Ministers of those countries, it was increasingly evident that if we don't stop Russia now, cyber attacking against governments, political parties, newspapers, and companies will only get worse.

This is a pattern of waging cyber attacks and military invasions against democratic governments across the world. Ukraine itself has been targeted by Russian hackers more than 6,500 times in just the past 2 months—earlier I used the examples of Estonia and Lithuania, but 6,500 times in just the past 2 months. Now we have evidence that Russia is working to undermine the elections in France and Germany.

This is not just about defending our own democracy; it is about defending the democratic way of life and democracies across the world. We must be a united front in fighting Russian aggression, and we must make it clear to Russia that there are consequences to their actions. That is why I joined a bipartisan group of my colleagues to introduce the Countering Russian Hostilities Act, legislation that would impose strong actions against Russia. These sanctions would address cyber attacks, human rights violations, and the illegal annexation of land in Ukraine and Georgia.

The world continues to look to America for its steadfast, steady leadership. The United States, a beacon for freedom and democracy, must continue to stand up against Russian aggression. The leader of our country should not be calling those reports that have been substantiated by 17 U.S. intelligence agencies ''fake news.'' That is what happened today.

On New Years' Eve, together with Ukrainian President Poroshenko and Senators McCain and Graham, we stood at the border of eastern Ukraine, 2 years after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, 2 years after the invasion of eastern Ukraine, 10,000 lives lost.

Ukrainian soldiers stood, and they have continued to stand, protecting their homeland and defending their democracy. For years, our allies have been subject to aggression and invasions, but they are undeterred, unwilling to give up what they fought so hard for: independence, freedom, and democracy. If we are committed to ensuring that Russia's hacking invasions and blackmail do not go unchecked, we must do everything in our power to uncover the full extent of this interference in our own political system. As our allies stand there every day losing people on the frontlines, looking to us for support, looking to us, we cannot turn our own backs on an invasion—a cyber invasion on our own democracy. We must also stand up for independence, freedom, and democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I want to initially begin by thanking my colleague from Oklahoma for graciously allowing me to proceed first ahead of him. He is, as ever, a terrific colleague. I would like to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague from Minnesota. I, too, led a bipartisan delegation—two Republican House Members and two Senate Democrats—to Eastern European in August and observed many of the same issues and concerns that she just raised and have joined her, along with 10 Republican Senators and 8 other Democratic Senators, in the legislation she mentioned. I think this is an important issue on which all of us should focus.

Mr. President, let me turn to the matter at hand, the nomination of Scott Pruitt to serve as the director of the EPA. I thank my colleagues, many of whom have come to the floor to speak about the nomination of Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA, and most essentially, my senior Senator and friend from my home State of Delaware, TOM CARPER, ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, who has ably led this fight.

I am glad to be able to join my colleagues to make clear why, in my view, someone who does not believe in a core Federal role in protecting the environment is not the right person to lead the Federal Agency charged with just that mission. It is possible that we in this Chamber have now forgotten why the Environmental Protection Agency was created in the first place. The idea of Federal protection of our environment really started to take hold when the Cuyahoga River caught fire, again, in June of 1969. The public outrage that rightfully followed this near-spontaneous combustion of a river helped lead to the EPA's creation in 1970 and the passage of the Clean Air Act the same year and the Clean Water Act in 1972.

Now, nearly a half century later, it is precisely because these laws and others like them have been successful in making us healthier and safer that it is easy to forget why we need them.

Institutions like the EPA don't run themselves. The environment does not protect itself, and big oil and gas and coal companies certainly don't police themselves. That is why the EPA exists. You would certainly hope that at the very least the Administrator of that Agency would support that core mission. Yet this evening we are considering the nomination of someone whose main experience with environmental protection at the Federal level is filing lawsuits against the Federal Environmental Protection Agency.

In fact, he has filed 14 of those lawsuits in just 6 years as attorney general of the State of Oklahoma. That is not all he has done. Scott Pruitt, in his confirmation hearing, refused to recuse himself from consideration of future cases which he brought against the EPA if confirmed.

Mr. Pruitt has also suggested that Senators who want more information about the details of his record should file FOIA requests rather than providing that information voluntarily. He has described himself as ''a leading advocate against the Federal EPA's activist agenda.'' Scott Pruitt has not been able to name in confirmation hearings one single environmental protection statute he supports. In my view, that is unacceptable for a State attorney general let alone someone nominated to be our Nation's highest ranking environmental protection official.

Mr. Pruitt's disdain for the core mission of the EPA leaves me without a doubt that he is unfit to take on this important role, but that is not all. Scott Pruitt either ignores or is ignorant of the core and important science of climate change, mercury, lead exposure, ocean acidification, to name just a few of many topics uncovered in his confirmation hearing.

Mr. Pruitt acknowledges the climate is changing but says the role, the influence of human activity is ''subject to debate.'' I am here to say this evening, that is simply not true. Only in an alternative universe, based on alternative facts, is the human impact on climate change still subject to debate. That is like saying that Scott Pruitt is fit to lead the EPA is subject to debate. I think after an exhaustive confirmation hearing and a review on the floor of the facts, it is not. It is simply not true.

Scott Pruitt also led a lawsuit against EPA rules that would reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired powerplants. He argued it was too expensive, too burdensome, but he also questioned whether mercury itself was

harmful to health. On that issue, the science is clear. Mercury has devastating effects on the development of the human nervous system.

Does Mr. Pruitt not get that or does he not care? Those are pressing questions for me. During his confirmation process, Mr. Pruitt was confused about ocean acidification, a process explained by very basic science. A question I was left with was whether Mr. Pruitt just did not get it or just did not care.

In that same hearing, he made statements that indicated he was unfamiliar with the Federal standards regarding lead in drinking water. I had to ask myself whether he simply has not heard of Flint, MI, or was not concerned.

My office alone has received nearly 1,000 calls and emails from Delawareans expressing concern about Scott Pruitt and the future of the EPA under his potential leadership, expressing concern and opposition. Delawareans have reached out to me saying they are worried about their kids with asthma; they are worried about clean drinking water for their families; they are worried about protecting our rivers, our wetlands, and other outdoor spaces in Delaware and around the country.

With Scott Pruitt potentially at the helm of the EPA, they are right to be worried. Let me end by sharing a brief excerpt of a letter from one of my constituents who lives in my hometown of Wilmington, DE. She wrote:

> Please vote against Scott Pruitt as leader of the EPA. Our children's future, their health and well-being, and their right to inherit a world we have not irreversibly destroyed may depend on it.

She is absolutely right. Our kids do deserve a better environmental future. To her and all the Delawareans who have contacted me and my friend and colleague from my home State, I hear you. I intend to vote against Scott Pruitt. If my colleagues in the Senate really want to stop pollution, we can start by keeping Scott Pruitt from going to lead the EPA.

Our environment should not be for sale, should not be neglected, and should not be turned aside from being the core mission of the Environmental Protection Agency. I think we all should stand firm against the nomination of Scott Pruitt to lead that important Agency.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is an absolute honor to be able to rise and speak in support of Attorney General Scott Pruitt. For the last 6 years, Scott has been a leader in the State of Oklahoma. He has been strongly committed to enforcing the law in Oklahoma as it is written and as is consistent with the Constitution. He is a statesman. He is a dedicated public servant.

As the Administrator of the EPA, I fully expect Scott to be able to lead the Agency to follow every environmental law and to partner with States, local authorities, and tribes to do what is best for the present and for the future. I have heard some people talk about their opposition to Scott's nomination, saying they don't believe Scott believes in clean air, in clean water.

That is not the issue for Scott. Scott absolutely believes in clean air and clean water, and the accusations that somehow he wants dirty air and dirty water and our children to be poisoned is ludicrous.

The question for Scott is not if we should have clean air and clean water, it is who is the primary steward of our clean air and our clean water. Everyone has a role. We are a nation that is connected to each other. What happens in one State does affect another State. That is why we have a national strategy working with the Environmental Protection Agency, but in the Clean Water Act and in the Clean Air Act, the States are given primary responsibility through what is called a State Implementation Plan to determine what is in their best interests and the best solutions to be able to deal with the issues of air and water.

Scott has fought for the State to be allowed to be in the driver's seat with regard to all of the State resources, arguing for those that work in wind farms, in oilfields, and on cattle ranches, for families who have drinking water and breathe the air and who live there. The people who should have the loudest voices should be the people who actually drink that water and breathe that air and understand the effects of it firsthand.

He has not been alone in this fight. As the attorney general of Oklahoma, he stood shoulder to shoulder with more than half of the States to ensure the Federal Government operates within the bounds of the statutes and the Constitution. He has consistently argued that the EPA, when they promulgate rules that violate that basic principle of the State Implementation Plan, should stop, do what the EPA does best, and have the EPA push the States to do what they should do best.

In an environment where Chevron deference is the precedent set, it is critical that the leader of an Agency that has such wide latitude to extract costs out of the economy, should respect the federalist foundation we have, and the pocketbooks of hardworking families, as well as our air and our water.

In previous congressional testimony, he stressed the importance of laws like the Clean Air Act, stressing that the intention was for States to work together under a model of cooperative federalism that protects the environment while considering economic costs.

Scott pursued cases against the EPA and other Federal agencies in an effort to enable and embolden our State government officials to craft the legislation that needs to be done. His focus has been not to eliminate environmental protections, it is to honor a country with tremendous diversity, from rocky mountains to open deserts, to beautiful woodland areas.

Surprisingly enough, the issues that we face on our environment, in the concrete jungle of Washington, DC, is different than it is in Woodward, OK. Let me give you an example of one of those cases that he engaged in. It is a case where the EPA created a new regulation called waters of the United States. It dramatically changed the definition of what are the areas the EPA can oversee and increased their regulatory authority by millions of acres in just one regulatory sweep.

The courts immediately stepped in and stopped this, and Scott Pruitt and many other States' attorneys general said: The EPA does not have the right to be able to step into almost every inch of our State and say they suddenly have regulatory authority.

In fact, the court said this: ''We conclude that petitioners have demonstrated a substantial possibility of success on the merits of their claims.''

Furthermore, they said this: ''What is of greater concern to us, in balancing the harms, is the burden—potentially visited nationwide on government bodies, state and federal, as well as private parties.''

The court stepped in and agreed with Scott Pruitt that the EPA was overreaching, and that case is still in the courts right now. That is a reasonable thing to be able to do, for an attorney general who has the responsibility to not only manage the legal issues of the State but also to watch out for the consumers of the State. As funny as it sounds, if you go to the EPA's website today and look at Oklahoma and air quality, here is what it says. The EPA website today reads: ''CAA permitting in Oklahoma. Clean Air Act permitting in Oklahoma is the responsibility of the Air Quality Division Exit of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.''

The EPA's website today says responsibility for this is from the Department of Environmental Quality in Oklahoma.

All our attorney general has done is said to the EPA: You should probably follow the law or at least your own website to be able to handle all of the permitting issues of who has authority to do this. For the past month, I have heard Senator after Senator come to this floor and describe my great State of Oklahoma in a way that makes Scott Pruitt sound like an ogre and my State sound like a toxic waste dump.

Let me give you an example. Attorney General Pruitt has been dismissed by some who say that he has personally been engaged in leading our State to such terrible air quality that the American Lung Association has given the counties in Oklahoma an F rating.

Well, that is an interesting accusation, until you actually go to the American Lung Association website

and see that they give almost every county in America an F rating. In fact, they give every county in Delaware an F rating in air quality. They categorize those under ''high ozone days'' and one of three counties just barely skated by with a D in particle pollution for Delaware, while in Oklahoma the two largest metropolitan areas actually received an A from the American Lung Association. Similarly, in that same study, Rhode Island lacks a single county that doesn't get an F for air quality on high ozone days, while only two counties received passing grades for particulate pollution.

The accusation that somehow the American Lung Association has looked at Scott Pruitt and his record on environmental policy and has given us dirty air quality is not actually true when you see the full study.

What is interesting, as well, is that the EPA publishes data about whether counties meet the national ambient air quality standards, and they have six criteria that the EPA puts out. In fact, recently they dropped their criteria significantly from the previous years. What is interesting, as well, is that for Oklahoma, last week, the EPA released their national ambient air quality standards, trying to determine which counties had attainment of the standard or nonattainment. Guest what. Every single county in Oklahoma—all 77—have attainment. Even as to the new standard that was just released, that we don't even have to operate under, we already meet those standards for ambient air quality.

Meanwhile, Maryland has 12 counties in nonattainment for at least 1 of those criteria. Connecticut has eight counties that don't meet those standards. California has 38 of their 58 counties failing to meet those standards in at least 1 criteria. There are 77 counties in Oklahoma, and every single one of them meets attainment.

I don't hear anyone standing on this floor challenging the attorney general of California or of Maryland or of Connecticut and demonizing them and accusing them of not taking care of the air and the water in their State.

By the way, I have also heard on this floor, as my State is being ripped apart for political gain, over and over that asthma rates for children are catastrophically high in Oklahoma and that Scott Pruitt should have been more engaged, filing lawsuits so that asthma rates would go down—until you look at the CDC website for asthma rates for children. It is 10.1 in Oklahoma. One child is too many. It is 10.1 percent in our State, but you can compare that to Rhode Island, which is 12.4; or Michigan, which is 10.7. Vermont beat us, by the way. They are 9.9—0.2 below us.

Again, I don't hear anyone on this floor calling out the attorneys general of Vermont, Michigan, and Rhode Island and saying they failed to protect their children because children have asthma in their State.

Another thing that is commonly said about Scott Pruitt and the State of Oklahoma is that he is committed to conventional energy sources and that he is stuck in the past, dealing with oil and gas.

I will tell you that Oklahoma is rightfully right proud of its history of oil and gas in our State. We have unlocked resources that have absolutely powered our Nation forward. We also have an incredible group of visionaries in our State that are driving renewable resources as fast as we are driving oil and gas in our State.

For all the folks that are here bashing oil and gas, I would remind you that you traveled to Washington, DC, on a plane, in a car, or on a train that was powered by Oklahoma energy. So you are welcome. And I will assume that, 2 weeks from now, when we return back for session, you are going to ride in on a horse just to be able to spite Oklahoma's energy—probably not. But can I remind you of something?

What is often overlooked about Oklahoma and what has not been stated here is that Oklahoma truly is an all-of-the-above energy State—solar, hydroelectric, geothermal, wind, oil, gas, and coal.

Let me give you an example—just one of the examples from that. Recent data shows that Oklahoma ranks third nationally in total wind power. We just passed California for total wind production. We are just barely behind Iowa and Texas. The installed capacity for Oklahoma alone—just in wind generation—is 1.3 million households powered by wind power out of Oklahoma.

I will admit that I am a little biased about my State. But I am weary of hearing people inaccurately demean the air and water in Oklahoma and try to accuse it of something that is not true for their political benefit.

Here is my invitation to any Member of this body. Why don't you come home to Oklahoma with me? I will buy you some great barbecue and drive you around the State. I will take you through the Green Country in the northeast part of the State, over to Kenton, OK, and Black Mesa to see the majestic area around our panhandle. We will drive four-wheelers in Little Sahara, and maybe we will drive down to Beavers Bend Park, stand under the tall trees, and put our feet in the crystal clear water of that river. I will even take you to my house in Oklahoma City, a community of a million people that exceeds the EPA air quality standards for ambient air quality.

We say in Oklahoma: ''The land we belong to is grand,'' and we mean it. We are passionate about our land, and we are passionate about our air and water. I will tell you that Scott Pruitt is passionate about his State and what we do there.

I will tell you how political this has really become. Mike Turpen is the former attorney general of the State of Oklahoma and, by the way, he is also the former chairman of the Oklahoma Democratic Party. Mike Turpen, when it was announced that Scott Pruitt was going to be tapped to be head of the EPA, released this statement:

> Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt is a good choice to head up the Environmental Protection Agency. I am convinced Scott Pruitt will work to protect our natural habitats, reserves and resources. His vision for a proper relationship between protection and prosperity makes him superbly qualified to serve as our next EPA administrator.

That is from the former head of the Oklahoma Democratic Party.

So far, my colleagues have found a good reason for every Cabinet nominee to delay, delay, delay. This has now been the slowest confirmation process for any President since George Washington. The tradition has always been that the President won an election, and he should be able to hire his own staff and his own Cabinet and get busy going to work. That is what the American people asked him to do.

Scott Pruitt deserves an up-or-down vote, and he deserves our trust to be able to take on and follow the law, doing what the EPA requires him to do.

Scott Pruitt is a friend. I understand that some of the folks who have attacked him have only met him at a hearing or read about him on some blog site. But I have prayed with Scott. I have seen Scott struggle with the hard decisions that affect our State's future. I have seen Scott listen to people from all sides of an issue, and I have seen him take difficult stands. I think he will be an excellent EPA Administrator, and I think he will make some wise choices to not only protect what is happening now but to be able to help protect us for the future.

You see, Scott is a husband and a dad as well, and he cares also about the future of our country. I think he is going to go after it, and he will be able to be an excellent Administrator in the days ahead.

TRIBUTE TO BRYAN BERKY

Mr. President, I would like to take a quick moment just to be able to reflect. I have a staff member named Bryan Berky. He is running off. He has been quite a leader. He is leaving us to be able to take on a new task and a new role.

Since 2010, he has been a tremendous asset to the Senate. Bryan Berky is a student of Senate procedures. He is the one in the office whom everyone wishes they had because, when something comes up and someone has some novel new idea of how the rules work, he is typically the one on the corner saying: Yes, that really won't work, and here is why.

He has been sharp on budget issues, on tax issues, and efficiency in government. He has been the one who has been passionate about the national debt—and not just talking about national debt but actually trying to solve it.

You see, Bryan Berky is one of those unique staffers not trying to make a

point. He is trying to actually solve the problem.

He was mentored by a guy named Dr. Tom Coburn, who wasn't too bad on those issues himself. He has led well, and I am proud that he has been on my staff.

As he leaves from the Senate, he will be sorely missed by this whole body—even by people who never met him. He had an impact, based on the things that he worked on.

If you want to get a chance to visit with Bryan Berky, though, you can talk about Senate procedures, tax policy, and nerdy budget issues or you can chat with him about Oklahoma State football. He spent his time through college working for the Oklahoma State football team, watching the films and breaking down every single play, preparing the team for practice and for the game days.

He is a great student of people and of process.

I just want to be able to pass on to the Presiding Officer that there is a guy named Bryan Berky who is leaving the Senate in the next week, and he will be sorely missed by this Senate and by our team in the days ahead.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, last year was the hottest year on record, and 16 of the last 17 years have been the warmest years ever recorded. Climate change science is some of the most thoroughly established and well-tested research in history, and 97 percent of the published research says climate change is real and caused by humans.

Climate change is an urgent threat to our health, our national security, and our economy. How we address it is what we need to debate, not whether it is real.

As I have said before, I will work with anyone in this Chamber—Republican or Democrat—to address this issue. That is appropriate because survey after survey of people in Colorado—a State that is a third Democratic, a third Republican, and a third Independent—demonstrates that they believe the science, no matter which party they belong to.

In a very welcome sign, just last week, a group of statesmen, including former Secretary of State James Baker III, former Secretary of State George Shultz, and former Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson, Jr.,—all Republicans—released what they described as a ''conservative climate solution.''

These distinguished leaders have come together at just the right moment—at the perfect moment—because our new President says that he is ''not a big believer'' in climate change. In fact, he claimed during the campaign that climate change was a hoax invented by the Chinese to make U.S. manufacturing noncompetitive.

Consistent with that view, the President's nominee to run the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, recently said that the debate over climate change is quote ''far from settled.'' He wondered in December whether global warming is ''true or not,'' whether it is caused by humans and whether the Earth is cooling instead of heating. As attorney general of Oklahoma, he sought to prevent the very Agency he has been nominated to lead from fighting climate change, suing the EPA 14 times.

It is important, I guess, to note that while it is rare for somebody in America to share these views, Attorney General Pruitt is not alone in his extreme views in the new President's Cabinet. Rick Perry, the nominee to be Secretary of Energy, wrote in his book that climate science is ''all one contrived phony mess'' and that the Earth is actually ''experiencing a cooling trend.'' Ben Carson, the nominee to run the Department of Housing and Urban Development, said: ''It is not clear if temperatures are going up or going down.'' Rex Tillerson, the new Secretary of State, said: ''None of the models agree on how climate change works.'' Mr. Trump's CIA Director, Mike Pompeo, said: ''There are scientists who think lots of different things about climate change.''

When the Pope was talking about the importance of addressing climate change, which he said was a very real threat, there was an American politician who said that the Pope should stick to religion and that he wasn't a scientist. In fact, the Pope studied chemistry. I am glad he is using his voice on this important issue.

To be clear, some nominees seem to have undergone a confirmation process evolution on climate, but this seems more an effort to hide their extreme views in an effort to be confirmed rather than a genuine conversion based on facts or science, and that is a shame because the world cannot wait for this administration to stop ignoring the science.

Over the past 150 years, human activity has driven up greenhouse gas levels in our atmosphere higher and faster than at any time over the last 400,000 years. That is not surprising because we have pumped almost 400 billion metric tons of carbon into the atmosphere since the start of the Industrial Revolution. As a result, carbon dioxide concentrations have risen from 280 parts per million to 400 parts per million for the first time in recorded history. That significant change over an insignificant period of time is dramatically changing the Earth. These emissions act like closed car windows: They allow light and heat in, but they don't allow most of the heat to ever escape.

Already, record heating has melted ice sheets as large as Texas, Georgia, and New York combined, adding billions of tons of water to our oceans every year. These rising seas have partially submerged cities in Florida and Georgia several times per year. They threaten 31 towns and cities in Alaska with imminent destruction. They are forcing a city in Louisiana to relocate its residents away from what is now an almost permanently flooded coast. By 2030, there won't be any glaciers left in Montana's Glacier National Park.

While extreme events and natural disasters become more frequent, so do the effects climate change has on our daily lives. In my home State, 7 out of 10 Coloradans know that climate change is happening, and nearly half say they have personally experienced its effects. Shorter winters are already a threat to Colorado's $4.8 billion ski and snowboard industry and its 46,000 jobs.

Since the snow is melting sooner, there is not enough water for what are now longer summers. Colorado's farmers are forced to grow food with less water, a changing growing season, and higher temperatures. Our agriculture industry employs over 170,000 Coloradans and contributes more than $40 billion a year to our economy. These changes are not only threatening farmers' livelihoods, they are changing production and food prices at grocery stores.

Our beer industry is even weighing in. This week, I received a letter from 32 brewers from around the country, including three from Colorado, who oppose Scott Pruitt's nomination because they depend on America's clean water resources to brew their beer.

Hotter summers and the droughts they prolong cause wildfires that now burn twice as much land every year than they did 40 years ago. Together, State and Federal agencies are paying nearly $4 billion a year to fight those fires. Warmer waters and drought are hurting animals everywhere, like our cutthroat trout populations in Colorado. That is not just a problem for the fish; in Colorado, rivers generate more than $9 billion in economic activity every year, including supporting nearly 80,000 jobs.

As warmer temperatures increase and spread across regions, so do incidents of vector-borne diseases like the West Nile virus and the hantavirus. And what do we do when we have longer, hotter summers? We crank up the air-conditioning, burning more fossil fuel and only perpetuating the problem.

I understand that sometimes it is hard to focus on climate change when the effects seem distant, but it should be impossible to ignore the immediate national security threat posed by climate change that is here today. Here in the Senate, in 2015, we passed a budget amendment with bipartisan support to promote ''national security by addressing human-induced climate change.'' That is what the amendment said. It got bipartisan support.

The former Secretary of Defense, the former Director of National Intelligence, and the former admiral in charge of U.S. Naval forces in the Pacific have all warned us that climate change is a threat to our national security.

Around the world, climate change is increasing natural disasters, refugee flows, and conflicts over basic resources like food and water, complicating American involvement and security. Climate change is linked to drought and crop loss and failure in southern Africa, leaving more than 6 million children malnourished by famine. It is increasing monsoons and heat waves in Pakistan, driving 11 million people out of their homes. It is even connected to water and food shortages that have intensified civil unrest from Egypt to Syria.

At home, climate change already has cost us billions to relocate and buffer military infrastructure from coastal erosion and protect military installations from energy outages. At the U.S. Atlantic Fleet in Norfolk, VA, the largest naval installation in the world, sea levels have risen over 1 foot in the past 100 years. All the systems that support military readiness, from electrical utilities to housing at that base, are vulnerable to extreme flooding.

When the Department of Defense ''recognizes the reality of climate change''—those are their words—''and the significant risk it poses to U.S. interests globally,'' we should listen. When the Nation's most recent national security strategy says that ''climate change is an urgent and growing threat,'' we should act.

As a Senator from Colorado, I understand very well why people sometimes are frustrated when the EPA, for instance, does take action—or sometimes when it doesn't take action.

There are certainly some regulations that don't make sense, where a well-intentioned idea or an ill-intentioned idea—I think they are usually well-intentioned—from Washington ends up not making sense when it hits the ground. That is why I fought to revise EPA fuel storage tank regulations that hurt Colorado farmers, ranchers, and businesses in my home State. I supported an amendment making the Agency take a look at a new regulation that burdens families trying to remodel older homes. There are other regulations that I voted to get rid of. I supported, for instance, lifting the export ban on crude oil from the United States of America, a bill that we passed last year in connection with a 5-year extension of the tax credits for wind and solar energy, a great deal for the State of Colorado—both the lifting of the crude oil export ban and the extension of the tax credits for wind and solar.

I have also supported and fought for our coal community. In Colorado, working with my colleague Senator GARDNER, I fought to keep a Colorado mine open to protect good-paying jobs in my State. I am proud to have a hard hat in my office bearing the signatures of the people who work at that mine.

I have to say tonight that the often-asserted claim that efforts to regulate carbon or more generally to protect our water and our air have significantly led to job losses in this country is false. This argument is a fraud perpetrated by politicians making promises that are broken from the start.

The reality—and it is important to understand the reality so we can remedy the situation—the reality is that free market forces and not mostly Federal regulation are transforming American electricity production.

American coal employment peaked in the early 1980s, long before we began seriously expanding natural energy. Natural gas has been gaining market share compared to coal since before 1990. Colorado, for example, has benefitted greatly from the natural gas boom. In almost every part of the United States, natural gas plants are now cheaper to build than coal plants. Facilities that were built when I became a Senator 8 years ago were built to import natural gas and are now being retrofitted to export natural gas to the rest of the world. That is good for our environment, and it is good for the geopolitical position of the United States.

Innovation is making renewable electricity more affordable for everybody. Between 2008 and 2015, the cost of wind power fell 41 percent. The cost of large-scale solar installations fell 64 percent. This has led to a 95-percent increase in solar deployment in 2016 over the previous year. The annual installation doubled in 1 year.

If we truly want to support our world communities, we should listen to Teddy Roosevelt, who once said that ''conservation and rural-life policies are really two sides of the same policy; and down at the bottom this policy rests upon the fundamental law that neither man nor nation can prosper unless, in dealing with the present, thought is steadily given to the future.''

The truth about the future is that there may be a lot of sound reasons to review, revisit, and even retire any number of Federal regulations, and I will bet there are, but cutting regulation will not reopen shuttered coal mines.

It is not about regulations or the EPA or about a War on Coal. Economic factors, market factors are driving the shift from coal to natural gas and renewables, and we need to recognize this shift and help coal communities adapt to a changing energy economy. They have contributed to building the economic vitality of this country. Their work helped us win World War II. We have to recognize the contribution; we can't just turn our backs. But we also need to acknowledge what is causing the changes that are occurring in our energy production because if we can't acknowledge the causes, we can't fix the problem; we can't make a meaningful difference for people in the communities that are affected by these changes; we can't fulfill what have become empty political promises instead of making real commitments on behalf of the American people.

We also have to take advantage of the changes in energy production to fuel economic growth and create new jobs. Already, renewable energy is creating jobs throughout the country. Energy efficiency employs 2.2 million Americans. Solar and wind companies employ more than 360,000 Americans, including more than 13,000 in my home State of Colorado. Colorado now ranks first in the country in wind energy manufacturing. All together, clean energy employment grew 29 percent between 2009 and 2014 in Colorado.

This isn't a Bolshevik plot, as I said on the floor before. These are American jobs. These are manufacturing jobs. These are plants where it is not just about the wind turbine but about all of the supply chain that goes along with it that can't be made in China and shipped to the United States and installed here. These jobs in this supply chain are American jobs. They are good jobs that pay a good wage, and they are meaningful to our economy. Last year, solar jobs grew 17 times faster than jobs in the rest of the national economy. They increased by 20 percent in Colorado in 1 year.

The expansion of natural gas, as I mentioned earlier, is also aiding our transition to a cleaner energy economy. Between 2005 and 2012, natural gas production grew by 35 percent in the United States. In Colorado, it expanded by 139 percent. Colorado now ranks sixth in the country in natural gas production as 10 of the Nation's 100 largest natural gasfields are now located in Colorado.

These industries together create good-paying jobs that can't be exported overseas; and all of these changes, taken together, are beginning to address climate change. From 2008 to 2015, the American energy sector reduced its carbon emissions by 9.5 percent. We reduced our carbon emissions by almost 10 percent while the country's economy grew by more than 10 percent, and we are starting to see the same trend around the world. Global emissions stayed flat in 2015 while the global economy grew. Turning our backs on reality is not a recipe for job creation in this country, but embracing the reality is.

So I would ask this new President, after the campaign he ran and the promises he made, why he would promote policies that will kill American jobs and industries. Unfortunately—I regret to say this—even though 70 percent of Coloradoans say climate change is real and that humankind is contributing to it, the answer to my question about this administration's policies comes back to what it believes—to what it believes is a debate on climate change.

If we allow science to become debatable, we can contort our thinking to fit any fiction at all to support or undermine any public policy. We risk discarding facts we don't like and ignoring experts with whom we don't agree in favor of special interests, which

often dominate our political system. Our country needs more from us than that. Our national defense demands more than that from us.

When State Department analysts concluded with evidence, with science, that the Keystone Pipeline would not materially increase carbon emissions—facts lost in the phony debate here in Washington—I voted for it against intense opposition from my own party and many of my strongest supporters. That was a painful vote, one of the most painful I have ever taken and difficult to explain to many people I admire, but I was guided by the facts, not by politics, guided by the science, not by politics.

We have always drawn strength as a country from our belief in science, our confidence in reason and evidence. It is what Harry Truman called our ''unflinching passion for knowledge and truth.'' In school, we teach children to support theories with facts and look to science to explain the world. When it comes to climate change, we cannot allow the narrow limits of political expediency and special interests to cloud our sound judgment. That is not a lesson we should be teaching our children who need us to act on climate. That would set a horrible example for the people who are coming after us.

Our ultimate success in addressing climate change will rely on the same scientific method that sent us to the Moon and eradicated smallpox. If we surrender evidence to ideology, when it comes to climate change, we abandon the process of scientific inquiry. We leave ourselves completely unequipped to defend what we discover to be true. We loosen our grip on the science that allows us to understand that evolution is real and vaccines are effective; that something is true and something else is false. That, not doubt and denial, is the lesson we should leave our children; that we have the courage to confront this challenge without bias; that we have the wisdom to follow facts wherever they lead. That is what this Senate should do. That is what our country should do.

We have seen the evidence now. It is not theoretical anymore that we can grow our economy, the fact that we will grow our economy, that we can conserve energy while we do it, that we can create entirely new industries and technologies to power the most significant economy that human beings have ever seen in the history of the world, and that we can deal with climate at the same time. The two are linked.

Apparently, that is not what this President believes, and that is not what his nominee to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency believes. Because that is so far out of step with what Colorado believes and for all of the reasons I have talked about today and for the sake of our climate and for good-paying American jobs all over this country—but particularly in Colorado—I am compelled to vote no on the President's nominee to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong opposition to President Trump's nomination of Scott Pruitt to be the next Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency.

The reason is simple. In a choice between corporate polluters and people who want to breathe air and drink water, Scott Pruitt sides with the corporate polluters. He has no business being the head of the EPA.

During his nomination hearing, Mr. Pruitt had countless opportunities to answer for his record. His responses were flippant, evasive, and outright misleading. He has been asked repeatedly to provide records from his office concerning dealings with big oil companies, but he told the Senators that, hey, they should submit an open records request, hoping that his confirmation would be over long before those documents would see the light of day.

Just a few hours ago, an Oklahoma district court judge ordered a dose of sunshine for Mr. Pruitt's dirty dealings from his perch as attorney general of Oklahoma. The judge has demanded that Mr. Pruitt cough up more than thousands of emails pertaining to his cozy relationship with Big Oil—emails he has been hiding from Oklahoma open records requests for over 2 years, but the Republican leadership is not interested in waiting. Its plan is to jam this nomination through tomorrow—4 days before the emails are slated to become public.

Are you kidding me?

If those emails show corruption, every Senator should have that information before—not after—they vote to put someone in charge of the EPA who may be there for years.

Clean air and clean water used to be a nonpartisan issue. In earlier decades, leaders in both parties had the courage to say no to suffocating smog and towering plumes of toxic chemicals poisoning our children. Republicans and Democrats came together, and together they declared that access to clean air and clean water was a basic right for all Americans. We passed the Clean Air Act, and we passed the Clean Water Act. We updated those laws when necessary, and we did those things together.

Together, we depend on the Environmental Protection Agency for three critical reasons: The EPA is the cop on the beat, protecting American families from corporate polluters that would put profit ahead of safety. It watches out for us and for our children; the EPA exists because pollution knows no State borders. What is burned at the powerplant in Ohio is breathed by children across Massachusetts; and the EPA takes on the ever-changing task of researching, monitoring, and regulating toxic emissions because the job is far too great for any one State to tackle.

To do all of this, the EPA routinely turns to local governments, businesses, and innovative workers for local solutions; the EPA turned to the University of Massachusetts to create a research center to assist smalltown water systems; the EPA turned to towns along Cape Cod and on Martha's Vineyard to pursue innovative solutions to increase coastal resiliency as sea levels have risen; and the EPA recently recognized New Bedford's exceptional work in monitoring industrial waste discharge in the city's collection system.

Across Massachusetts and across the Nation, the EPA sets big national goals that help inspire ingenious local solutions. The EPA is one of our great successes as a nation, but that success has not come without a fight. Each time the EPA has taken a step to clean our air, industry has poured more and more money into the debate, yelling that regulation is just too costly and that companies can never survive if they have to clean up their act.

In the 40 years following the Clean Air Act, emissions of common air pollutants fell nearly 70 percent while the number of private sector jobs doubled. Industry talks about the costs of pollution controls because dirty is cheap. Clean air saves more than 160,000 lives each year. Clean air saves more than 3 million schooldays our children would have collectively lost. Clean air saves 13 million workdays the hard-working, healthy Americans simply can't afford to miss.

Scott Pruitt doesn't measure success by this yardstick. No. He measures success by how happy his corporate donors are. As Big Oil's go-to attorney general from Oklahoma, Pruitt has spent the last 6 years trying to silence the life-saving, data-driven work of dedicated EPA employees and scientists. And now, those big polluters have their fantasy EPA nominee—someone who will work on their side and not on the side of the American people.

How about a couple of examples. When EPA issued a rule to limit mercury, arsenic, and other toxic chemical emissions from coal powerplants, Mr. Pruitt questioned whether mercury poses a health hazard. Mercury is a well-known neurotoxin. It means that it poisons the nervous system. And Scott Pruitt thinks he should question whether it poses any health hazard. Wow.

Or maybe it is this example. When the EPA moved to reduce leaks of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 30 times more potent than CO_2, he turned the Oklahoma AG's office into a clearinghouse for big oil to pursue lawsuits attacking the EPA. Scott Pruitt has spent so much time with his campaign donors that he honestly appears incapable of understanding the difference between the financial interests of millionaires who run giant oil companies and the health and well-being of the 4

million human beings who actually live in Oklahoma.

The people need a voice more than ever. For generations, Oklahoma has had very few earthquakes. Then, oil companies decided to up production, to pull every last drop of oil out of the ground. But with every drop of oil came useless, toxic radioactive salt water waste, and it has to go somewhere. So they took the cheapest option available: Pump billions of barrels of wastewater deep underground, under immense pressure, and that is when the problems started. Suddenly, earthquakes—big earthquakes with a magnitude of 3.0 and above, started occurring every day across Oklahoma.

Here was Mr. Pruitt, the State attorney general, the people's lawyer. What did he do? Did he seek relief for the families that were stiffed by insurance companies? Did he join residents who were suing to stop the drilling while their homes crumbled? Did he even pretend to do something—you know, like maybe issue a strongly worded press release supporting frightened citizens? No, not Mr. Pruitt. No, Mr. Pruitt stood by his friends in the oil industry, and the heck with everybody else.

Mr. Pruitt has been consistent in his work for big oil. As attorney general, he dismantled the environmental protection unit in his office—dismantled the environmental protection unit. He appointed a billionaire oil man to be his 2014 campaign chair, and he ignored the citizens he was sworn to protect. That is the measure of Mr. Pruitt as a public servant.

A State attorney general is supposed to serve the people. Right now, Massachusetts attorney general Maura Healey is leading the case to prove that ExxonMobil deliberately deceived the public about the impact of climate change on our economy, our environment, our health, and our future. Good for Maura. Did Scott Pruitt join that suit? Of course not. Pruitt ran to the defense of one of the world's largest corporations, whining about how that corporation felt bullied. Instead of working as the attorney general for Oklahoma, Mr. Pruitt has served as the attorney general for Exxon.

Finally, Scott Pruitt has the nerve to say that the cause of climate change is ''subject to more debate.'' More debate? We had that debate in the 1980s, in the 1990s, in the 2000s. Maybe Mr. Pruitt missed it, buried under a pile of big oil money.

So let me just offer a summary. For well over a century, we spewed fossil fuel filth into our atmosphere. And, yes, this allowed us to fuel the thirsty appetite of our 20th century economy. But that blistering pace came at a price.

Our planet is getting hotter. Our coasts are threatened by furious storm surges that sweep away homes and devastate our largest cities. Our poorest neighborhoods are one bad storm away from being under water. Our naval bases are under attack—not by enemy ships but by rising seas; droughts and wildfires are all too familiar across the country. Refugees are fleeing homes that are no longer livable. And the risk of rapidly spreading diseases like malaria and Zika is on the rise.

Our coastal communities don't have time for politicians who deny science. Our farmers don't have time for more debate. Our children don't have time for more cowards who will not stand up to big oil companies defrauding the American people.

Scott Pruitt has been working hard for big oil to dismantle the EPA, and now, President Trump wants to give him that chance.

Where are the Senators who will stand up for the health, the welfare, and the safety of their citizens? Where are the Senators who will stand up for the people's right to breathe clean air and drink clean water? Where are the Senators who will have the courage to demand action on climate change so that our children will have a chance to inherent a livable Earth?

In the end, despite this despicable record, if the Republicans link arms again, there will not be enough of us to stop this nomination. But make no mistake, if President Trump wants a fight over the health of our children, a fight over the creation of clean energy jobs, a fight over the very future of our planet, then we will fight every step of the way.

We will fight alongside moms and dads who know the terror of a childhood asthma attack. We will fight alongside the cancer victims. We will fight alongside the fishermen and the hunters. We will fight alongside the families of Flint, MI, and everywhere else in America where families cannot safely turn on their water taps or step outside and take a deep breath.

We are all in this together.

People in Massachusetts care deeply about preserving a safe and healthy environment for our kids and our grandkids. We see it as a moral question. And I receive letters from people all across the State, describing how important clean air and clean water are to them and how worried they are about what Scott Pruitt leading the EPA will mean for our most vital natural resources. I hear those concerns and I share those concerns.

I would like to read just a few of the many letters that I have received about this nomination.

Edward from Dennis wrote to me on behalf of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod about the importance of the EPA to coastal communities in Massachusetts. Here is Edward's letter:

> The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC), the Cape Cod region's leading nonprofit environmental education and advocacy organization, writes to state our strong opposition to the appointment of Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt for the position of Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. We urge you to vote against his nomination.
>
> APCC is deeply concerned that Mr. Pruitt's record of vigorously opposing the efforts of the EPA to protect the nation's water and air quality is in direct conflict with his responsibilities as EPA Administrator to ensure that the agency's important work continues. In fact, his record clearly shows that his loyalties side with polluters instead of with the environment and the welfare of the American people. Of particular concern is Mr. Pruitt's refusal to accept the science of climate change and the implications this has for EPA's ongoing efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> In addition, the EPA has most recently played a vital role in furthering efforts to protect and restore water quality through its Southeast New England Program (SNEP) for Watershed Restoration, a program that has greatly benefited coastal communities in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. We worry that important initiatives such as the SNEP program, which was originally proposed by Senator REED with the strong support from each of you, will be in jeopardy under the oversight of Mr. Pruitt, should he be confirmed as EPA Administrator.
>
> The New England states, as well as the entire nation, have made significant strides forward in addressing the protection of our air and water. However, much more needs to be accomplished. With so much at stake, we cannot afford to step backward in our effort to protect the environment. We, therefore, urge you to oppose the nomination of Mr. Pruitt for EPA Administrator.

Thanks, Edward, for writing, and thanks to all of you at the Association to Preserve Cape Cod for the work you are doing every single day. It makes a real difference.

While all sorts of people have written to my office about Mr. Pruitt, I have noticed that a lot of people are writing in about kids—their kids, kids they work with, or just kids in general. My constituents are concerned about Scott Pruitt's commitment to protecting the air our kids breathe and the water they drink, and I share those concerns.

I heard from Mary in Worcester, who is concerned about the effects of environmental toxins like lead on children. She is concerned both as a parent and as a family doctor. Here is what Mary had to say:

> With so much focus in Washington on ensuring politicians are held to a strong ethical standard, I ask you to oppose the nomination of Scott Pruitt as EPA Administrator. I wrote to you yesterday asking the same, but after the hearing yesterday, it is increasingly clear that Mr. Pruitt is unfit.
>
> In addition to being a parent, I am also a Family Medicine physician. Rarely, I see children who are exposed to lead through environmental sources. This is rare because lead has been regulated, and as such rates of lead poisoning, and the accompanying irreversible brain damage, have plummeted.
>
> But yesterday Mr. Pruitt revealed that he knows nothing about this issue, responding to Senator Cardin, ''Senator, that is something I have not reviewed nor know about.''
>
> I continue to ask you to oppose him and to encourage colleagues to do the same.

Thank you for writing, Mary. That is why I am here tonight—to encourage my colleagues to oppose him.

I heard from Elizabeth in Belchertown, as well. Here is what she wrote:

> As a resident of MA and a teacher of AP Environmental Science in a public high

school in western MA, I am writing to express my concern about the appointment of Scott Pruitt as director of the EPA. He appears to be the exact opposite of the qualifications and perspective of a person who should have that position. As you know, he has close ties to fossil fuels, has repeatedly sued the EPA, avoided mercury legislation, and espoused the belief that the EPA is too powerful. I urge you to work with other Senators to block this appointment.

Thank you, Elizabeth. The work that you are doing, that teachers are doing, is more vital than ever now, and I share your concerns. Thank you.

A man from Boston wrote to me with concerns about Scott Pruitt's ties to fossil fuel companies, and here is what he said:

As a constituent who cares about our environment, I want you to know I am deeply concerned about the nomination of Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

Scott Pruitt is firmly in the pocket of the oil and gas industry. He is not concerned with the world we leave for our children. As a father and an educator, I am fighting his nomination because I have a responsibility to care about the world I leave children and not merely the wealth my cronies accumulate.

Pruitt has actively worked to dismantle protections for clean air and clean water that people and birds need to thrive. The EPA must adhere to science and support common-sense solutions for ensuring a healthy environment and stable climate for people and wildlife.

Please oppose confirming Scott Pruitt and demand a nominee instead who will represent the vast majority of Americans—regardless of party affiliation—who support strong action and safeguards for our air, water, and climate.

I couldn't agree more with what he said.

Wendy from Newton wrote to me about the concerns as well. Here is what she had to say:

Dear Senator, I am appalled and scared by the possibility of Scott Pruitt to head the EPA. It will be disgraceful if he is confirmed. To appoint someone who stands against everything that agency is for is cynical, disrespectful and dangerous in this urgent time of climate change. Now more than ever we need a strong EPA that believes in science and will protect us from environmental disaster. I hope you will do everything you possibly can to fight against Pruitt getting confirmed.

Thank you for writing.

I also heard from Arlene in Wayland, who is worried about what the future of the EPA means for her two grandchildren. Here is what she had to say:

Senator Warren, please assure your constituents that you will not support Scott Pruitt's nomination to head the EPA. Mr. Pruitt is an enemy of the agency and of the future of our environment. He has stood in the way of the agency's purpose to protect our air and water. He is ignorant of the findings of climate science and medical studies on toxicity, has dealt dishonestly with Congress, and is so obviously in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry. Please use your considerable persuasiveness and rigor to convince your colleagues in the Senate to ditch his nomination. The future of my two grandchildren depends on it. Thank you.

Thank you for your note, Arlene. I am doing my best, and so are the rest of the Democrats. We just need some Republicans to help us out here.

Joan from Maynard reached out to me about her experience working with children who have suffered from lead poisoning. Here is what Joan wrote:

I have been an Educational Advocate for children with disabilities for 24 years. I've worked with children who suffer from lead poisoning, and they are heartbreaking. Even the smallest exposure has life-long profound consequences. I haven't personally seen anything the level of what has happened in Flint, MI, but I know that it's a tragedy for a generation of children in Flint.

Pollution of our waters is just one of the risks we face if Scott Pruitt is approved. There are countless more, many evident and others not readily apparent, but ready to unfold. Please, please fight this appointment in every way you can.

Thank you, Joan, for writing and for the important work you do. Believe me, I am fighting in every way I can.

A man from North Falmouth wrote to me, worried that the progress we have made on protecting public health and the future of our planet is in danger. Here is what he said:

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt is a lifelong ally of corporate polluters. Pruitt's nomination is a clear threat to the nation's public health and the progress made on common-sense pollution standards. I cannot tolerate the appointment of a fossil fuel cheerleader to lead the nation's environmental protection efforts. In 2014, Pruitt literally acted as a messenger between Devon Energy and the EPA in an attempt to stifle public health protections.

Please continue to defend the Clean Power Plan and methane pollution standards against the influence of the fossil fuel industry. 64% of Americans are concerned about climate change, we deserve a leader who will take action to protect air quality.

Thanks for writing. I really appreciate it.

Since President Trump nominated Mr. Pruitt, I have received hundreds of letters like these from people in Massachusetts who are worried about what he will mean for the environment and for the future of our planet, but I have also heard from the experts, people who understand the ins and outs of the EPA and its mission. Hundreds of former EPA employees who have serious concerns about Mr. Pruitt's record on the environment sent a letter to me and my colleagues here in the Senate. Here is what they wrote:

We write as former employees of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to share our concerns about Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt's qualifications to serve as the next EPA Administrator in light of his record in Oklahoma. Our perspective is not partisan. Having served under both Republican and Democratic presidents, we recognize each new Administration's right to pursue different policies within the parameters of existing law and to ask Congress to change the laws that protect public health and the environment as it sees fit.

However, every EPA Administrator has a fundamental obligation to act in the public's interest based on current law and the best available science. Mr. Pruitt's record raises serious concerns about whose interests he has served to date and whether he agrees with the longstanding tenets of U.S. environmental law.

Our nation has made tremendous progress in ensuring that every American has clean air to breathe, clean water to drink and uncontaminated land on which to live, work and play. Anyone who visits Beijing is reminded of what some cities in the U.S. once looked like before we went to work as a people to combat pollution. Much of the EPA's work involves preserving those gains, which should not be taken for granted. There are also emerging new threats as well as serious gaps in our environmental safety net, as the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, painfully demonstrates.

Our environmental laws are based on a partnership that requires EPA to set national standards and give states latitude when implementing them so long as certain minimum criteria are satisfied. This approach recognizes that Americans have an equal right to clean air and water, no matter where they live, and allows states to compete for business without having to sacrifice public health or environmental quality.

Our environmental laws include provisions directing EPA to allow for a ''margin of safety'' when assessing risks, which is intended to limit exposure to pollutants when it is reasonable to expect they may harm the public health, even when all the scientific evidence is not yet in. For example, EPA's first Administrator, Bill Ruckelshaus, chose to limit the amount of lead in gasoline before all doubt about its harmfulness to public health was erased. His actions spared much of the harm that some countries still face as a result of the devastating effects of lead on human health. Similarly, early action to reduce exposure to fine particle pollution helped avoid thousands of premature deaths from heart and lung disease. The magnitude and severity of those risks did not become apparent until much later.

Mr. Pruitt's record and public statements strongly suggest that he does not share the vision or agree with the underlying principles of our environmental statutes. Mr. Pruitt has shown no interest in enforcing those laws, a critically important function for EPA. While serving as Oklahoma's top law enforcement officer, Mr. Pruitt issued more than 50 press releases celebrating lawsuits to overturn EPA standards to limit mercury emissions from power plants, reduce smog levels in cities and regional haze in parks, clean up the Chesapeake Bay and control greenhouse emissions.

In contrast, none of Mr. Pruitt's many press releases refer to any action he has taken to enforce environmental laws or to actually reduce pollution. This track record likely reflects his disturbing decision to close the environmental enforcement unit in his office while establishing a new litigation team to challenge EPA and other federal agencies. He has claimed credit for an agreement to protect the Illinois River that did little more than confirm phosphorus limits established much earlier, while delaying their enforcement another three years.

In a similar vein, Mr. Pruitt has gone to disturbing lengths to advance the views and interests of business. For example, he signed and sent a letter as Oklahoma Attorney General criticizing EPA estimates of emissions from oil and gas wells, without disclosing that it had been drafted in its entirety by Devon Energy. He filed suit on behalf of Oklahoma to block a California law requiring humane treatment of poultry. The federal court dismissed the case after finding that the lawsuit was brought not to benefit the citizens of Oklahoma but a handful of large egg producers perfectly capable of representing their own interests. To mount his challenge to EPA's rules to reduce carbon pollution from power plants, he took the unusual step of accepting free help from a private law firm. In contrast, there is little or

no evidence of Mr. Pruitt taking initiative to protect and advance public health and environmental protection in his state.

Mr. Pruitt's office has apparently acknowledged 3,000 emails and other documents reflecting communications with certain oil and gas companies, but has yet to make any of these available in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed more than two years ago.

Contrary to the cooperative federalism that he promotes, Mr. Pruitt has suggested that EPA should refrain from trying to control pollution that crosses state lines. For example, he intervened to support a Farm Bureau lawsuit that would have overturned a cooperative agreement between five states and EPA to clean up the Chesapeake Bay (the court rejected the challenge). When asked how a state can protect its citizens from pollution that originates outside its borders, Mr. Pruitt said in his Senate testimony that states should resolve these disputes on their own, with EPA providing ''informational'' support once an agreement is reached. But the 1972 Clean Water Act directs EPA to review state water quality plans, require any improvements needed to make waters ''fishable and swimmable,'' and to review and approve plans to limit pollutant loads to protect water quality. EPA's power to set standards and limit pollution that crosses state lines is exactly what ensures every American clean air and water, and gives states the incentive to negotiate and resolve transboundary disputes.

We are most concerned about Mr. Pruitt's reluctance to accept and to act on the strong scientific consensus on climate change and act accordingly. Our country's own National Research Council, the principal operating arm of the National Academies of Science and Engineering, concluded in a 2010 report requested by Congress that human activity is altering the climate to an extent that poses grave risks to Americans' health and welfare. More recent scientific data and analyses have only confirmed the Council's conclusion and added to the urgency of addressing the problem.

Despite this and other authoritative warnings about the dangers of climate change, Mr. Pruitt persists in pointing to uncertainty about the precise extent of humanity's contribution to the problem as a basis for resisting taking any regulatory action to help solve it. At his Senate confirmation hearing, he stated that ''science tells us that the climate is changing, and that human activity in some manner impacts that change. The ability to measure with precision the degree and extent of that impact, and what to do about it, are subject to continuing debate and dialogue, and well it should be.'' This is a familiar dodge—emphasizing uncertainty about the precise amount of humanity's contribution while ignoring the broad scientific consensus that human activities are largely responsible for dangerous warming of our planet and that action is urgently needed before it is too late.

Mr. Pruitt's indulgence in this dodge raises the fundamental question of whether he agrees with the precautionary principle reflected in our nation's environmental statutes. Faithful execution of our environmental laws requires effectively combating climate change to minimize its potentially catastrophic impacts before it is too late.

The American people have been served by EPA Administrators, Republicans and Democrats, who have embraced their responsibility to protect public health and the environment. Different administrators have come to different conclusions about how best to apply the law in view of the science, and many of their decisions have been challenged in court, sometimes successfully, for either going too far or not far enough. But in the large majority of cases it was evident to us that they put the public's welfare ahead of private interests. Scott Pruitt has not demonstrated this same commitment.

Thank you for considering our views.

Thank you to all who signed that letter and for the incredibly important work that you have done to protect our environment. I am with you all the way.

Next, I wish to read an article published by The Atlantic that uses Scott Pruitt's actions to critique his appointment to head the EPA. Actions speak volumes louder than words, and his tell a pretty compelling story of exactly how he will lead the Agency. Here is what it says:

While broad strokes of Trump's policies were never in doubt, there was often enough bizarreness to wonder what he would do with the powers of the Environmental Protection Agency.

On Wednesday, those questions were all but settled. Trump has chosen E. Scott Pruitt, the attorney general of Oklahoma, to lead the EPA. . . .

In a certain light, Pruitt is an inspired choice to lead the EPA, as he has made fighting the agency a hallmark of his career. His own website calls him ''a leading advocate against the EPA's activist agenda.'' The significance could not be more clear: As he promised on the trail, Trump will likely use the powers of the presidency and the legal expertise of Pruitt to block or weaken the Obama administration's attempts to fight climate change.

And Trump will be able to try for more than that. For what distinguishes Pruitt's career is not just his opposition to using regulations to tackle climate change, but his opposition to using regulation to tackle any environmental problem at all. Since he was elected Oklahoma's attorney general, in 2010, Pruitt has racked up a sizable record—impressive in its number of lawsuits if not in its number of victories—of suing the EPA.

Many of these suits did not target climate-related policies. Instead, they singled out anti-pollution measures, initiated under presidential administrations, that tend to be popular with the public.

In 2014, for instance, Pruitt sued to block the EPA's Regional Haze Rule. The rule is built on a 15-year old program meant to ensure that air around national parks is especially clear. Pruitt lost his case.

Last year, he sued to block a rule restricting how much mercury could be emitted into the air by coal plants. He lost that, too.

And early in his tenure, he sued to keep the EPA from settling lawsuits brought by environmental groups like the Sierra Club. That one was dismissed.

He has brought other suits against EPA anti-pollution programs—like one against new rules meant to reduce the amount of ozone in the air—that haven't been heard in court yet. While ozone is beneficial to humans high in the atmosphere, it can be intensely damaging when it accumulates at ground level, worsening asthma and inducing premature deaths. The American Lung Association calls it ''one of the most dangerous'' pollutants in the United States.

All this is not to say that Pruitt has omitted climate regulations from his litigation. His most common target has been the Clean Power Plan, the Obama administration's set of Clean Air Act rules meant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. The Clean Power Plan is Obama's main mechanism for pushing the United States to meet its pledge under the Paris Agreement.

Pruitt began suing the EPA to block the Clean Power Plan more than two years ago. Now, Oklahoma is one of the 28 states challenging the agency in court, and it helped succeed in getting the Supreme Court to block the rules in February.

But Pruitt's understanding of the bill seems not entirely legally minded in two significant ways. First, Pruitt's knowledge of global warming appears to be lacking, at best. Earlier this year, for instance, he wrote in the National Review that ''scientists continue to disagree about the degree and the extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind.''

While this sounds reasonable, it is not true. The overwhelming consensus among scientists who study the Earth is that humans are largely to blame for the planet's warming. Climate scientists understood this to be the case since at least the early 1990s, and since then, scholarly consensus on the issue has only strengthened. The majority of scientists also believe that global warming will be quite harmful; the scientific debate about its ''degree and extent'' is only about how bad it will be and how soon its consequences will kick in.

Second, Pruitt has worked extremely closely with oil and gas companies in opposing the plan. In one case, a New York Times investigation revealed that Pruitt sent an official letter to the EPA, bearing his signature and letterhead, that had been almost completely written by lawyers at Devon Energy, a major oil and gas company. It was delivered to Pruitt's office by Devon's chief lobbyist.

Energy firms and lobbyists, including Devon, have donated generously to the Republican Attorneys General Association, which Pruitt has led. In interviews after the Times report, Pruitt described the collaboration as a kind of constituent service, saying that Devon is based in Oklahoma City. He agreed with the letter's legal reasoning, he said, so he signed it.

''I don't think there is anything secretive in what we've done,'' Pruitt told The Oklahoman. ''We've been very open about the efforts of my office in responding to federal overreach.''

Now Pruitt could be the one doing the federal reaching. Environmental groups immediately condemned Trump's selection of him. ''The EPA plays an absolutely vital role in enforcing long-standing policies that protect the health and safety of Americans, based on the best available science,'' said Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, in a statement. ''Pruitt has a clear record of hostility to the EPA's mission, and he is a completely inappropriate choice to lead it.''

Once, it had seemed like perhaps Trump—who speaks often of his adoration for clean air and clean water—would bypass those old fights and only target Obama's new climate rules. But with Pruitt leading his EPA, it seems that Trump's administration will act like its GOP predecessors. Whether it is successful depends on the Senate, on the courts, and on how well environmental advocates make their case to the public.

Finally, I wish to share a few excerpts from an in-depth New York Times article that uncovered Scott Pruitt's extensive ties to energy companies. The article clearly explains the massive conflicts of interest that Mr. Pruitt would face as Administrator of the EPA. Here is what it says:

The letter to the Environmental Protection Agency from Attorney General Scott Pruitt of Oklahoma carried a blunt accusation: Federal regulators were grossly overestimating the amount of air pollution

caused by energy companies drilling new natural gas wells in his state.

But Mr. Pruitt left out one critical point. The three-page letter was written by lawyers for Devon Energy, one of Oklahoma's biggest oil and gas companies, and was delivered to him by Devon's chief of lobbying.

''Outstanding!'' William F. Whitsitt, who at the time directed the government relations at the company, said in a note to Mr. Pruitt's office. The attorney general's staff had taken Devon's draft, copied it onto state government stationery with only a few word changes, and sent it to Washington with the attorney general's signature. ''The timing of the letter is great, given our meeting this Friday with both the E.P.A. and the White House.''

Mr. Whitsitt then added, ''Please pass along Devon's thanks to Attorney General Pruitt.''

The email exchange from October 2011, obtained through an open-records request, offers a hint of the unprecedented, secretive alliance that Mr. Pruitt and other Republican attorneys general have formed with some of the nation's top energy producers to push back against the Obama regulatory agenda, an investigation by the New York Times has found.

Out of public view, corporate representatives and attorneys general are coordinating legal strategy and other efforts to fight federal regulations, according to a review of thousands of emails and court documents and dozens of interviews.

For Mr. Pruitt, the benefits have been clear. Lobbyists and company officials have been notably solicitous, helping him raise his profile as president for two years of the Republican Attorneys General Association, a post he used to help start what he and his allies called the Rule of Law Campaign, which was intended to push back against Washington.

''We are living in the midst of a constitutional crisis,'' Mr. Pruitt told energy industry lobbyists and conservative state legislators at a conference in Dallas in July, after being welcomed with a standing ovation. ''The trajectory of our nation is at risk and at stake as we respond to what is going on.''

Mr. Pruitt has responded aggressively and with a lot of helping hands. Energy industry lobbyists drafted letters for him to send to the EPA, the Interior Department, the Office of Management and Budget, and even President Obama, the Times found.

Industries that he regulates have joined him as plaintiffs in court challenges, a departure from the usual role of a state attorney general, who traditionally sues companies to force compliance with state law.

Energy industry lobbyists have also distributed draft legislation to attorneys general and asked them to help push it through state legislatures to give the attorneys general clearer authority to challenge the Obama regulatory agenda, the documents show. And it is an emerging practice that several attorneys general say threatens the integrity of the office.

The message is clear across Massachusetts and across the Nation: Big Oil's go-to attorney general is Scott Pruitt, and he has no business running the EPA. He has proven over and over again that he will put short-term industry profits ahead of the health of our children. This nominee has no interest in protecting every American's right to breathe clean air and drink clean water. We cannot put someone so opposed to the goals of the EPA in charge of that very Agency.

For these reasons, I will be voting no on Scott Pruitt. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of all nominations on the Secretary's Desk; that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE ARMY

PN16 ARMY nominations (2) beginning Jeremy D. Karlin, and ending Iraham A. Sanchez, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2017.

IN THE NAVY

PN17 NAVY nomination of Mathew M. Lewis, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2017.

EXECUTIVE CALENDER—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that of the postcloture debate time under my control, that 60 minutes be yielded to Senator SCHATZ, 60 minutes be yielded to Senator WHITEHOUSE, 35 minutes be yielded to Senator MERKLEY, and 15 minutes be yielded to Senator CANTWELL.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that of the postcloture debate time under my control, that 50 minutes be yielded to Senator MERKLEY.

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

The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I think it is important to understand what just happened today that makes this debate on Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA so critically important. We call ourselves the world's greatest deliberative body, and that is actually a well-earned reputation. Sometimes we move slowly. Sometimes we move so slowly that it is maddening for both parties and for the American public. There is a reason that the Senate moves slowly. It is because in a lot of instances it has the weightiest decisions that any public official could ever make. In this instance, we are deciding on the person to comply with the Clean Air and the Clean Water Acts, the Endangered Species Act, to discharge their duties as the leader of the EPA.

Something happened today that changes this whole debate. In Federal law, there is something called FOIA, the public records law regarding Federal officials. Most State laws have some kind of open records law, and Oklahoma is no different. There was a lawsuit against the Oklahoma attorney general, Scott Pruitt, and it basically said: Listen, you have to disclose the emails between your office and a bunch of energy industry companies. And the context here is absolutely important. Scott Pruitt is not just a person who is bad on the issue of climate; this is a person who is a professional climate denier. This is a person who has made his bones, politically and professionally, trying to undermine all the authorities the EPA possesses. This is a person who is a plaintiff in multiple lawsuits, as the Oklahoma attorney general, against the EPA. This is a person who has not promised to recuse himself when he is running the EPA. So imagine that there are going to be pending lawsuits where he was the plaintiff, and they are going to still be before the EPA. He was asked in committee whether he would recuse himself, because obviously it is preposterous to be both the plaintiff and the defendant in a lawsuit. It just stands to reason. He did not promise to recuse himself.

So this is a person who has an incredibly close, uncomfortably close working relationship with the fossil fuel industry. He may have that as a sincerely held belief, but the Oklahoma State law requires that he disclose whom he is working with. Why is that relevant? Well, he actually had a couple of instances where he has taken language given to him, sent to him by email from oil companies, and he just copied it—select all, copy, drop it, paste it—onto Oklahoma attorney general letterhead, and then transmitted it to the EPA as if it were from the AG's office in Oklahoma. So that is the context.

What did this Federal judge say today? An Oklahoma County district court judge said that according to the Oklahoma Open Records Act—Aletia Haynes Timmons from the district court of Oklahoma instructed Pruitt's office to hand over the emails by close of business next Tuesday.

So here we are, trying to jam through this nomination, and now it makes perfect sense why they wanted to run the clock. They had congressional delegation trips to Munich for the security conference. There were Republicans who were planning to meet with NATO allies. There was another overseas trip of great import. Yet they abandon all other obligations, all other objectives, and they are bound and determined to run this clock until 1 p.m. tomorrow because they need to vote before these emails become disclosed. Tuesday is when we will see these emails. Yet we seem to be in a

race to get this vote done tomorrow at 1 p.m. Something feels wrong about this. Something feels like they are worried about the contents of those emails.

Gosh, I hope I am wrong. I hope on Tuesday that these emails are perfunctory, professional, proper. I hope I am wrong. I hope my fears and suspicions about what may be in those emails are unfounded. But here we are in the so-called world's greatest deliberative body, and we decided we don't even need another 2 business days to deliberate or to gather more information.

This is a decision that will stick for 4 years. This is a nominee who will run one of the most important Federal agencies that there is, the one in charge of clean air and clean water. The person in charge of clean air and clean water has been corresponding with oil and gas and coal companies—nothing necessarily illegal or untoward about that, but he seems to not want people to know what the content of that correspondence was.

The context here is very, very important, and that is why I am asking that we delay this vote until every Member of the Senate can read and review these emails. I think it is very important that we understand what is in the contents of those emails because there are some things we know about Mr. Pruitt. I am going to try really hard not to impugn his personal motivation. I have no doubt he feels sincerely about the issues we are arguing about. I don't have any reason to believe he has personally done anything improper. But I think it is totally reasonable for us to just see what is in those emails next Tuesday.

This isn't that we are trying to drag this out for 6 weeks or 6 months. This isn't that we are trying to cook up an issue. I didn't know about these emails, actually, until Monday. I didn't know there was a court case. I was perfectly ready to say: Look, it looks like they have the votes. We will have our argument. Maybe we can persuade a couple of people—certainly SUSAN COLLINS has been a profile in courage here, and there are Members of the Senate on the Republican side who have been on the right side of climate. But you know what, all that gets washed away. All that gets washed away because you don't get to be on the right side of climate and vote for a climate denier for the Environmental Protection Agency.

And lest you think I am being a little bit overheated here in terms of who Scott Pruitt is, this is what Scott Pruitt has said about himself. He describes himself as a leading advocate against the EPA's agenda. On the role of the EPA he says:

> I believe that the EPA has a role to play in our Republican form of government. Air and water quality issues can cross State lines, and can sometimes require Federal intervention. At the same time, the EPA was never intended to be our Nation's frontline environmental regulator.

That is kind of a well-put-together statement, but I want you to understand how radical of a statement that is, because the EPA was designed to be the Nation's frontline environmental regulation.

The basic premise is that there are certain things that can be done at the local level that ought to be done at the local level. When we configured our governments, we decided we want police forces and firehouses and other municipal services—sewer and water, and trash pickup—certain things get done locally. Some things get done at the county level. Some things get done at the State level. And what we have decided as a nation is that because pollution doesn't recognize municipal, State, or even Federal boundaries, that we actually need Federal law to make sure that if one State is polluting, it doesn't move over to the other State. So the idea that the EPA was never intended to be our Nation's frontline environmental regulator, which is what Mr. Pruitt says, is actually quite radical. It is an intentional misunderstanding of what the EPA is for. It is intended to be our frontline environmental regulator.

Here is Mr. Pruitt on climate change:

> Global warming has inspired one of the major policy debates of our time. That debate is far from settled. Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connections to the actions of mankind. That debate should be encouraged in classrooms, public forums and the halls of Congress.

I have to hand it to Mr. Pruitt—he magnificently describes radical policies as though they are not radical. He is very skillful at that. He is very lawyerly at that.

He did very well, in my view, in the EPW Committee, but his views are essentially that the EPA is not the frontline in terms of protecting clean air and clean water, and that blows up the mission of the EPA.

I see the Senator from Rhode Island is here. I would be happy to entertain any questions he may have in a moment.

A couple more quotes from Mr. Pruitt on the Clean Power Plan:

> The president could announce the most ''state-friendly'' plan possible, but it would not change the fact that the administration does not have the legal authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon emissions.

''[T]hat the administration does not have the legal authority for regulate carbon emissions.'' Wrong. Factually wrong. Legally wrong. This has been settled. Massachusetts v. EPA. I left my law degree in my apartment, but I know Massachusetts v. EPA, and I know this is flat wrong. So what he says is totally radical. He is a skillful guy. I assume he is a good guy, but he wants to undermine the basic authorities of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.

I will finish with this quote before I yield for a question from the Senator from Rhode Island on methane regulation.

> My concern is that the EPA is employing its flawed methodology in order to rationalize new and unjustified federal regulations to solve a methane emissions problem that simply does not exist.

That has no basis in fact.

I see the Senator from Rhode Island. Before I yield for his question, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senators from Rhode Island and Oregon.

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

Mr. SCHATZ. I would be happy to yield to the Senator from Rhode Island, if he is ready.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. A question of Parliamentary order here. The time during the colloquy will continue to be charged to the Senator from Hawaii, correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Through the Chair, I would inquire of the distinguished Senator from Hawaii whether, in addition to the concern about pollution that crosses borders when it flows down rivers or that crosses borders when it comes out of smokestacks and floats across State borders into other States, is there not also a supremacy clause in the U.S. Constitution that puts Federal law ahead of State law where there is a conflict?

Are there not means and manners by which a Federal official could either pretend or actually believe or try to impose a Federal rule in a way that interferes with the rights of States that wish to protect themselves more than the fossil fuel-friendly Administrator and inhibit their ability to do so?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I thank the Senator from Rhode Island. I think one of the great challenges is that it is one thing to misunderstand the EPA's role here; that is dangerous enough as the attorney general of a State or the head of the Republican Attorneys General Association. But when you are in the EPA and you have charge to administer the law, to discharge your duties under Federal law, to the degree and extent that you misunderstand the authorities in the Clean Air Act as either weaker than they may be or sort of optional—I mean, this is the issue in Massachusetts v. EPA.

For instance, the question around carbon was resolved. There were a couple of questions. First of all, is carbon an airborne pollutant? The Supreme Court and the EPA made their finding, and they determined that it was an airborne pollutant.

Once you determine that something is an airborne pollutant, it is not for the EPA, on a discretionary basis, to try to regulate that airborne pollutant. They are then required under Federal law to regulate that pollutant.

So part of the misunderstanding here is the question isn't, Is the EPA authorized to regulate carbon? It is, Are they required to regulate carbon? So he has it wrong doubly—first of all, on the law and second of all, on the science.

I think the danger of putting someone like that in a position of authority

is that they will preempt States, California and others—although California has some pretty significant carve-outs—but they will at least attempt to preempt the States from doing what they want to do to protect their clean air and their clean water.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Will the Senator yield for another question?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. The Senator from Hawaii is a very kind as well as a very distinguished individual, and he is willing to spot Mr. Pruitt's sincerity in the way he goes about his business. I am a skeptical New Englander, and I think Mr. Pruitt looks a little bit too bought and paid for to spot him that same degree of sincerity.

But to the question of the Federal and the State role, to the extent that it was Mr. Pruitt's position that the EPA should not be on the front line, that it is actually up to the States to bear the bulk of this burden and to be on the front line and enforce environmental laws and protect their Senators, what about the conduct of the Oklahoma attorney general's office might give us some pause as to his sincerity in this being a federalist question in which the power to regulate should be enforced at the State level by strong attorney general enforcement as former attorneys general like myself know?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I thank the Senator for that question. It is a really important one because essentially what Scott Pruitt is saying is: Hey, let's let the States handle this. But if you are to take him at his word, I think it is not unreasonable to say: Well how did you handle enforcement of either State or Federal environmental law as the top cop in the State of Oklahoma? Right?

He did two things that would cause everybody to question his commitment to even local environmental protection. The first thing he did when he came in as Oklahoma AG—a lot of offices the attorney general have environmental protection units. It is like a big law firm. They have different units that handle different kinds of crime. They have a civil division; they have a criminal division. They do lots of things. One of the divisions is to enforce environmental law. He disbanded it. He disbanded the State attorney general's division that enforces environmental law. Then he beefed up this thing that did not exist until he got there, which was essentially a division to undermine Federal authorities.

So you are right. He has them coming and going. He is making an argument that the State should be empowered to enforce environmental law. At least we could take that as kind of on-the-level federalism. We have some good Republican colleagues who just really believe that the government that governs least governs best. They think that local problems should be solved at the local level, even though, in my view, when it comes to air pollution and water pollution, that is essentially preposterous because pollution moves.

I really believe that for some of these Members it is a sincerely held belief. It is hard to believe this attorney general when he says: Hey, give us the authority to enforce our environmental laws, and then, when the rubber hits the road—which is how many lawyers you put on the job, how many cops you put on the beat—he basically eviscerates the division that enforces environmental law, and he beefs up this division that is basically a little shop that sues the EPA to undermine the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act federally.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. If I recall the facts of this correctly, not only did he shut down the environmental unit of the department of the attorney general, but in subsequent reporting you could not find a dollar allocated to environmental activities in the Oklahoma attorney general's budget. And he abandoned what his predecessor, Drew Edmondson, had been running, which was not just to have an environmental enforcement unit within the department of the attorney general, but also to have an environmental enforcement team that brought together Federal folks, State regulators, water officials, and put together the multiagency task force that prosecuted environmental cases—gone also.

Finally, Drew Edmondson used to do an annual report, as I recall, on the successes of his environmental enforcement and his environmental task force, the multiagency group. That was gone too.

In addition to all of those facts, what worries me a little bit—you know, one of the things we have to assess in this process is the credibility of the nominee. Are they going to tell you the truth in the nomination process? If they are not going to tell you the truth in the nomination process, you are probably going to get a lot of malarkey out of them down the road as well.

He took the position that he actually had not gotten rid of the environmental unit. He said he had moved it into a new unit—the federalism unit—which, if you go to their own website and read about the federalism unit, it says it is an appellate. You don't do environmental enforcement at the appellate level; you do environmental enforcement at the trial level, and you do it at the investigative level.

Further, if you read down, the word ''environment'' never appears in the general description of that unit. So it is not as if there is just one little wrinkle of the environmental unit kind of magically disappearing under this guy. Wherever there was any activity by the department of the attorney general with respect to the environment, he shut it down, zeroed it out, silenced it, finished it.

I believe that is a pretty fair description of the status in Oklahoma.

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I think the Senator is right. You know, it is fair to look at his record. It is also fair to look at his words. In 2016—so this is not 10 years ago; this is less than a year ago—he said: Legislation should not be ''we like clean air, so go make clean air.'' It is something that bothers me, that Congress then gives this general grant of authority to EPA.

Congress has given a general grant of authority to the EPA. That is what the law says. So, my concern, when it comes to Mr. Pruitt, is that he understands, as a member of the bar, as an attorney general, what the law says. He has been operating in a political context, I think it is fair to say, as the head of the Republican Attorneys General Association. Working with energy companies, he has been very aggressive in cultivating friends across the country who are very enthusiastic about his nomination and potential confirmation.

But he totally misunderstands the mission of the EPA. It is granted by the Congress, a general authority to enforce clean air. That is what the EPA is, really; it is clean air, and it is clean water. That is what the EPA is about.

The thing I think is especially troubling for me when it comes to the politics of this, is that there was a bipartisan consensus for many, many, many years around the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. I believe the reauthorization of the Clean Air Act came under President George H.W. Bush. This used to be not very controversial because, actually, we can fight about the Iran deal, we can fight about women's reproductive health, we can fight about LGBT rights, we can fight about civil rights, we can even fight about foreign policy and the size and scope of the government, but even if you are an extremely conservative individual, you ought to believe, to the extent that we have government at all, that it should be responsible for keeping us safe and that it is a Federal role to make sure our air is clean and our water is clean.

So this person who is very skillful in kind of eluding—you know, he basically dodged punches in that EPW Committee. We have some very skillful members on the EPW committee. They are very knowledgeable, very passionate. It was rough, but he was able to avoid a sort of knockout blow. The reason is that he is a professional climate denier. This is what this guy has been training to do all of his life.

So, again: We like clean air, so go make clean air. That is something that bothers me.

The Congress then gives a general grant of authority to EPA on the Oklahoma environmental regulations. He said: Federal regional haze standards—if you live in Oklahoma, I understand. You did not vote for Barack Obama, but I don't think you thought you were voting to reduce air quality. So he says that Federal regional haze standards threaten the competitive edge Oklahomans have enjoyed for years with low-cost and reliable electric generation.

This low-cost energy not only benefits Oklahoma manufacturers, but gives the State a considerable edge in recruiting jobs. He is the attorney general. He is supposed to enforce the law. I mean, that sounds like a Member of Congress. That sounds like a Member of the State legislature. But it does not sound to me like someone who is prepared to discharge their duties under the Federal law.

Another space where Mr. Pruitt has some alarming views is on science itself. I am deeply concerned about what is happening to science, to scientists, to government research. We just confirmed the Director of OMB who, in a Facebook post, wondered out loud—he had some questions about the Zika virus. I am not sure he had any special expertise to be raising these questions. We should all be researching and be as scientifically literate as possible, but the OMB Director put on his Facebook post: I have these questions. I am really interested in this, but the real question is whether we should have publicly funded research at all.

So there is a full-on attack on science and facts. There is a full-on attack on reality. But when it comes to environmental science, it is so consequential. I am looking at these pages sitting here. I think about everybody's children and grandchildren. We just have an obligation to get the data right, to really understand what is happening with air quality and water quality.

Here is what Mr. Pruitt says about mercury. ''Human exposure to methylmercury resulting from coal fired EGUs is exceedingly small.''

This is, again, the White Stallion Energy Center versus EPA.

This is what the scientists say: ''As a result of these long-term mercury inputs, there are hotspots and whole regions, such as the Adirondacks of New York, the Great Lakes region of the Midwest and large portions of the Southeast where the fishery is contaminated with mercury.''

There are more fish consumption advisories in the United States for mercury than all other contaminants combined.

I can tell you, just on a personal level, to the Senator from Rhode Island, that I like my ahi. I like my fresh sashimi. I like tuna, and everybody in Hawaii likes fish. So you kind of watch how much marlin you eat, how much ahi you eat because we understand that there is a real mercury problem. This isn't made up. If you talk to ER doctors in Honolulu, they have to deal with mercury poisoning on a weekly basis. That is what the science shows, and that is what the reality shows.

Here is what Mr. Pruitt says: ''The record does not support EPA's findings that mercury, non-mercury metals, and acid gas pose public health hazards.''

And here is what the scientists say: ''There is no evidence demonstrating a safe level of mercury exposure.''

So before yielding for a question, I think it is really important for all of us to understand what is at stake here. We have a nominee who is really unique in the history of the EPA because never before have we had a person who has made it their life's mission to undermine the Agency which they wish to lead.

You could probably argue that Mr. Puzder, who just withdrew his nomination yesterday, had a similar kind of attitude about the Department of Labor.

But even under Republican administrations, we have had Republican Administrators of the EPA who understood: Hey, look, the law is the Clean Air Act, the law is the Clean Water Act, the law is the Endangered Species Act, and I have an obligation, as the EPA Administrator, to accept those premises—right?—and to be the EPA Administrator, to not sort of be on my crusade against Federal law.

If he wants to undermine Federal law, he can go litigate that. He can be a private attorney or he could run for the Congress and try to be a lawmaker. But to the degree and extent that he wants to run the Agency with a specific statutory mission, he has to follow those statutes. And I have seen no evidence that he has any respect for or understanding of those statutes.

I would be happy to yield to the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Well, on the subject of respect for and obedience to statute, I thought we might want to discuss for a minute the Oklahoma open records law which the attorney general of Oklahoma not only needs to obey, but he needs to enforce it. He is not just subject to that law. He is the agency responsible for policing compliance with it.

What we have just seen is 750 days of noncompliance by his office with an Open Records Act request where he refused to provide anything to us in the EPW Committee. And, by the way, shame on the Environment and Public Works Committee for allowing that to happen. Shame on the Environment and Public Works Committee for—on a purely partisan basis—not allowing us to get those emails that this office had covered up and suppressed for 2 years.

Finally, they got before a judge and the judge said: Release that first set Tuesday—Tuesday. So he is sitting on several thousand emails between his office and the big energy companies and the big energy organizations, and he stonewalls everybody for 2 years.

When a judge finally gets a look at this misbehavior, first she says: That is an abject failure. Second, she says: That is unreasonable under the statute. And third, she says: Produce them Tuesday.

This was a guy who didn't think he could produce them Tuesday. He couldn't produce them for 2 years, and now the judge says Tuesday.

So when you are looking at his adherence to law, his respect for law, it seems to me that this is yet another example in which off he goes. The beneficiaries are himself and all the big fossil fuel companies that he was engaged with. That is who the beneficiaries were.

The people who lost were the ones who were supposedly the beneficiaries of the law—the public, the right to know, transparency.

So it makes for an interesting comparison to his version of compliance with the law. And if that is the best he can do complying with an Oklahoma statute that he is obliged not only to comply with but to enforce, what reasonable conclusion would my colleagues draw about his willingness to follow Federal law, which he also despises?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I thank the Senator for the question.

This is what is happening today. It would be enough if we were in the process of debating and confirming a climate-denier to the EPA. It would be enough that this person is a plaintiff in 17 lawsuits against the EPA. It would be enough that he is a plaintiff in these lawsuits against the EPA and he refused to recuse himself if he is running the EPA. As Senator MARKEY says, he is going to be plaintiff, defendant, and judge in these lawsuits.

All of that would be enough, but today a judge is compelling him to release around 3,000 emails that have squarely to do with the debate that we are having, which is this: Is this person a little too close to the industry that he is going to regulate?

As I said before, gosh, I hope these emails, as they are disclosed, show nothing. I hope that my suspicions, my fears, my concerns are without foundation. But I think about the Republicans, the good Republicans on the other side of the aisle who are voting for this man tomorrow.

Boy, they had better hope there is nothing in those emails. They had better think very carefully about what is in those emails. They might want to delay this vote themselves because, look, if there is nothing in those emails, then we can vote two Mondays from now—no harm no foul. You have career professionals at EPA doing their job. EPA will run for another 5 or 6 business days. It is OK.

We are the world's greatest deliberative body. We go slow on almost everything, and we are rushing on this. Why are we rushing?

Well, I was trying to figure out all week why we were rushing. Then I understood that the court was going to rule today, and they are jamming this. They are ramming this down the American people's throats.

I would just offer this to my Republican colleagues: These emails are going to be disclosed, and maybe you guys and gals know that there is nothing to be concerned about in terms of the content of these emails, where the Oklahoma attorney general is corresponding with a bunch of fossil fuel

companies. Maybe it is all good in those emails.

But the thing is, if that is the case, why did he refuse for 750 days to offer the emails up? I mean, it literally takes more work to not provide the emails than to provide the emails. You have to lawyer up to not do something. You are going to lawyer up as the Oklahoma attorney general to not comply with an Oklahoma statute. This takes a special effort.

Why would somebody want to undertake such a special effort to not comply with State law? I don't know. But I think we may find out on Tuesday.

Gosh, I hope I am wrong. But I have a feeling that the people who are most nervous right now about what is in those emails—in addition to the American public who care about clean air and clean water—are the Republicans who are being forced to vote at 1 o'clock without seeing them. They are being forced to vote on this person to run the EPA that they know is unpopular.

I mean, I understand that in some States this guy is tremendously popular because it is very easy to blast the EPA. In some portion of the Republican conference, Scott Pruitt is totally popular. I get that.

There is a nontrivial number of Members on the Republican side who actually don't want to be on the wrong side of the public when it comes to clean air and clean water, but they are going to be on the wrong side of the public when it comes to clean air and clean water. And it might get worse next Tuesday.

I really wonder why you would work so hard to not disclose the contents of 3,000 emails over a 750-day period.

I want to quote from Mr. Pruitt again on climate change:

> Global warming has inspired one of the major policy debates of our time. That debate is far from settled.

Here is what the scientists say: ''The scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify taking steps to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.'' This is from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences in 2005. This wasn't just some sort of recently arrived at conclusion.

Here is Mr. Pruitt again on climate:

> We've had ebb and flow. We've had obviously, climate conditions change throughout our history. That's scientific fact. It gets cooler, it gets hotter. We don't know the trajectory, if it is on an unsustainable course. Nor do we know the extent by which the burning of fossil fuels, man's contribution to that, is making this far worse than it is.

I mean, sorry, this is not what the scientists say. This is what I say. That is just bunk. There was a point at which that was a tenable position, even if it was scientifically bunk, easily 15 years ago. It was politically kind of workable 10 years ago—maybe even 8 years ago and, depending on your community, 5 years ago. But there is a majority of Republicans who understand the urgency of climate change.

The only place where the reality of climate change continues to be debated fiercely is in the halls of Congress.

Local people in every community across the country understand that this thing is settled fact. This thing is upon us. You don't have to be some wonk. You don't have to understand ocean acidification. You don't have to understand exactly what is going on. You just have to, A, listen to experts who know about climate, who know about weather, who know about atmospheric science. Even if you don't believe any of the experts, you just have to believe your own experience. There is not a person out there—whether they are a fisherman on the Big Island or a farmer in the Midwest or a hunter in the Southwest—there is not a person out there who isn't experiencing the weather getting strange.

Everybody understands that 1 day of weird weather does not climate change make. But there is just no doubt that severe weather and odd weather is getting more frequent and more odd and more severe.

Here is what the scientists say about climate change:

> The scientific evidence is clear: Global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now, and it is a growing threat to society.

Here is Mr. Pruitt again:

> Is it truly man-made and is this just simply another period of time where the Earth is cooling, increasing in heat? Is it just typical, natural type of occurrences as opposed to what the administration says?''

I mean, this is so far out of the mainstream that it would be funny if it weren't terrifying. It would be funny if it weren't terrifying to think that the person who is going to run the Environmental Protection Agency, the person who is going to be in charge of administering the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act is saying: Is it truly man-made and is this just simply just another period of time where the Earth is cooling, increasing in heat? I mean, is it just a natural type of occurrence, as opposed to what the Obama administration says?

I would be happy to yield to the Senator for a question. I will note that we have a joke where I am the good cop and he is the bad cop, but I think over time, we are merging.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Well, I wanted to go back to lawyering for a minute in response to the Senator's comments about the predicament that the other side is being put into—being asked to vote on the nominee, knowing that the disclosure of thousands of emails between the nominee and the industry and companies that he is going to supposed to regulate is imminent—is imminent. As the distinguished Senator from Hawaii said, maybe there is nothing in those; maybe this is just an empty concern. But over and over and over, emails have been really important at breaking investigations open. Certainly, our friends on the other side—until the election in November—had a fascination with emails, a fixation with emails. They couldn't get enough of other people's emails. And now suddenly everybody is looking at the ceiling, examining the ceiling tiles when it is time to wonder about these emails.

There is a doctrine, if I recall successfully back in the days when I was a more active lawyer, called willful blindness, which is the wrongful act of intentionally keeping oneself unaware of something—the wrongful act of intentionally keeping oneself unaware of something. If that doesn't describe what is being done right now to the Republican Senators about these emails with this vote, I don't know what does, but what I do know is that willful blindness under the law is a culpable state of mind. It is a culpable state of mind in civil cases, where you can be held liable because of deliberate willful blindness, and it is a culpable state of mind in criminal cases, where you can be found guilty of a criminal offense based on a finding of willful blindness.

So this is no small predicament that the majority leader is creating for his Republican Members in the mad rush to get this fossil fuel tool voted on before this stuff all comes out, and it is either going to be good or it is going to be bad, and if it is bad, there will be a price to pay for having ignored this emerging avalanche of emails. If they are good, fine, no harm done, but who really gets hurt if it is bad?

We are going to be examining Pruitt over this, when they come out. If these are bad things, there could be investigations that ensue and an enormous amount of stuff can take place, but there will be ownership on the other side of the aisle for the willful blindness they are displaying toward this package of emails that we now know are on their way and that we know were wrongfully withheld because the judge said so. The judge said it was an ''abject failure'' under the law. The judge said it was unreasonable. So we know it is wrong, and still, still, comes the vote.

You have to wonder what the power force is here that makes that happen. In astronomy, there are dark stars, black holes. Because they are dark and because they are black, you can't see them in the sky. You have to deduce their presence when light bends around them and when their gravitational pull affects the behavior of other heavenly bodies. When you look for those weird, anomalous behaviors in space, that is a signal that some dark star is out there operating. This is a lot of weird and anomalous behavior. And what is the dark star that is causing the majority leader to put all the Republican Senators, other than SUSAN COLLINS, in peril, in terms of willful blindness to this release of emails, which everybody knows now is coming and which everybody knows now was wrongfully delayed—wrongfully and deliberately delayed—by this attorney general as the enforcer of the disclosure of his own emails.

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I think——

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. If there was a question in there.

Mr. SCHATZ. You were asking about the willful blindness.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. There you go.

Mr. SCHATZ. I want to make an observation that there are a couple of kinds of willful blindness. One is willful blindness about climate change in the first place, a desire not to hear the truth, a desire to put blinders on when it comes to these issues. I will note that not every time but almost every time we have a debate on climate, we have a nice complement of Democrats on this side and a totally empty Chamber on the other side. It is not that they don't know what is going on, it is that they know exactly what is going on, and they don't want to deal with it. They don't want to deal with it, and they are good people and patriotic people, but there is a reason to believe this willful blindness is not coincidental.

I would just implore the Senate Republicans who respect the Senate, who understand our special role under the Constitution to give advice and consent on nominations for Cabinet positions, that this isn't some minor sub-Cabinet position. This isn't some matter of little import. I understand both sides employ tactics to delay action on the Senate floor. That is kind of part of the way this body works, right? The minority slows the majority down, and we try to come to some kind of consensus, sometimes a unanimous consent agreement or whatever it may be, to try to make this place work a little better, and it is maddeningly slow, but it forces bipartisanship, right?

I understand the accusation that sometimes gets made that we are just trying to delay for delay's sake. At the beginning of this week—look, I ran for the Senate because of climate. That is how passionately I feel about this issue, but I understood how this thing was lining up, and I said: Look, let's fight the fight. There is no magic between 28 hours and 30 hours. There is no magic between 29 hours of talking about this and 26 hours of talking about this. I was prepared to fight the fight and move this week. I didn't want to employ extraordinary delay tactics. I was actually even arguing with some of my colleagues, with whom I agree so much on climate, about the sort of efficacy just delaying for another couple of hours, but we are not trying to delay another couple of hours for no particular reason. There are 3,000 emails that a judge in Oklahoma is compelling Scott Pruitt to provide to the public, and not 6 weeks from now or 6 months from now but 3 business days from now. On Tuesday morning, the public and, maybe in this instance even more importantly, the Members of the U.S. Senate, who are in a position to determine whether this is the right person to run the Environmental Protection Agency, are going to see the contents of these emails. Do you know what? It is probably nothing. These 3,000 emails that are correspondence between the Oklahoma attorney general, the head of the Republican Attorneys General Association, and a bunch of fossil fuel companies—this guy who has sued the EPA and tried to undermine the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act 17 times, this guy who refuses to recuse himself from running the EPA, from being both a plaintiff and a defendant, I am sure the 3,000 emails he has delayed releasing for 750 days—I am sure the 3,000 emails he has delayed releasing for 750 days and is only going to have to provide them to the public because a court is making him, I am sure there is nothing in them. But just in case, why don't we just find out what is in them? Because it seems to me that if they are awful, it would give pause to Republicans.

I just don't get why the Republicans—I understand why people want to jam this through before maybe something bad happens on Tuesday, but if I were a rank-and-file Republican, I would be saying: This looks a little goofy. We don't normally vote on Fridays at 1 p.m., we normally vote on Thursdays at 2:15 so everybody can race off to the Reagan airport and go home. If it is 2:15, I can't get home until Friday, but most people can get home. We vote on Thursday afternoons, and in rare instances do we vote on Fridays—debt ceiling, continuing resolutions, big stuff. We have been moving on nominees kind of at a normal pace. Listen, it has been tough. We have a lot of late nights here. We thank the Senate staff for hanging in here with us. We apologize for the difficulty that you have to undertake to make the Senate work and for us to do our constitutional duties, but isn't it weird that we are just jamming this through on a Friday afternoon?

If I were a rank-and-file Member, I would go to my leadership and say: Hey, this is getting a little weird. I don't want this thing to blow up when I am back home at a townhall.

I would be happy to yield to the Senator from Oregon. There is no better climate champion than JEFF MERKLEY. It is probably a two-way tie with the junior Senator from Oregon and the Senator from Rhode Island. Before yielding to a question, thank you for your dedication on this issue for the people of Oregon and for the people of this country, but I am happy to yield for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity that my colleague from Hawaii has given me to ask a question. Particularly, I appreciate his willingness to be on the floor making this case because being the guardians of clean air and clean water in the United States of America is an incredible responsibility, and the individual we place in this position as Director of the Environmental Protection Agency is going to make decisions that will affect the life and death of millions of American citizens, that will affect the quality of life of millions of American citizens.

When the Director of the Environmental Protection Agency proceeds to say we are to fight for the mercury standard, that means that fewer children will be exposed to a persistent neurotoxin that stunts the development of our children's brains. On the other hand, if that individual says: I am not concerned about that or I think I will just look the other way because I want to help the fossil fuel industry make a few more bucks, and he decides that weighs more heavily than the health of our children, then the health of our children is impacted. That is true with one form of pollutant and another, and they are just across the landscape. This is an incredibly important position. That is why understanding the viewpoints of the nominee is so critical.

My understanding is that the individual who controls access to the emails in Oklahoma is the attorney general; am I correct in that understanding?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes, the Senator is correct.

Mr. MERKLEY. So we have a situation where an individual has accepted a nomination from the President for this incredibly important position and then has turned around and said: By the way, I am the guardian of the gate for the very records the Senate needs to see in order to determine if I am a fit character for this position, and he says: No, I will not allow the Senate to see my records.

My question to my colleague from Hawaii is as follows: Just the fact that a nominee, accepting a nomination and knowing the Senate has a responsibility to vet the nominee, who turns around and says, but you can't have access to my records, shouldn't that in itself disqualify that individual from consideration?

Mr. SCHATZ. I thank the Senator for the question. I just want to ask the Presiding Officer what the parliamentary situation is; has my 60 minutes expired?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has not.

Mr. SCHATZ. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 54 minutes.

Mr. SCHATZ. I thank the Presiding Officer.

I don't know if it is disqualifying. I would say it is strange, in the extreme, to have the chief law enforcement officer of a State and the head of the Republican Attorneys General Association not comply with his own State statute. This isn't trivial. Not that it would be OK for the attorney general not to comply with any law, but this isn't a nontrivial issue. This is letting the public know the nature of your correspondence with industry—especially since I think it is fair to say that I think even he would agree that he has

distinguished himself among attorneys general as a lead advocate against the EPA and as an advocate for fossil fuel-generating companies. So it is not unreasonable for the public to say: Well, let me understand what the nature of your correspondence was.

My very basic question to the Members of the Senate on the Republican side is, Why in the world would we vote at 1 o'clock before we get these emails? I understand that if we had said, give us 6 months so we can see these emails, that would be preposterous. That would be us delaying for delay's sake. Listen, we feel so strongly, I think it is fair to say about this nominee that we might have even tried that, but then in that case the majority would be within their rights to say: We are not going to let you delay for delay's sake.

But this is not delay for delay's sake. There is information that is exactly on point.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. With respect to delay for delay's sake, when a judge finds that the emails can be made available and the judge finds today that the emails can be made available by Tuesday and the attorney general has kept them bottled up for more than 750 days, it would seem that the accusation that delay for delay's sake does not belong with the Democratic minority on this issue. Would it not be a badge that would fit rather well on the attorney general from Oklahoma?

Mr. SCHATZ. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for that question. The Senator is right that he has been delaying because he wants to be confirmed as the EPA Administrator before these emails become public. There is no other reason that I can think of that is so important that we get the EPA Administrator in. Remember, we have the HUD nominee, we have the Department of Commerce nominee, we have the Department of the Interior nominee, and we have the Department of Energy nominee, who has responsibility and stewardship over our nuclear arsenal. We have decided we are not going to run until Friday afternoon getting a person in charge as the Secretary of Energy to take care of our nuclear arsenal, but it is a really big hurry—and we have to literally prevent Members from meeting with NATO allies—to get this guy through. I really didn't understand earlier in the week what the big rush was and why Pruitt and why now.

Listen, every Wednesday we are in some kind of negotiation about what kind of legislation and what kind of matters come before the Senate, and both sides sort of puff up their chests and make threats about going through the weekend, and we usually come to some sort of agreement. Yet this week there was no budging, and now I get it. They were afraid this judge was going to do what this judge did. This judge is requiring these emails to come out, and I think they are terrified about what these emails say.

Do you know what? There is only one way to prove me wrong, which is to call our bluff and delay. Let's go two Mondays from now. We have a recess, and we will all read the emails. Then it will be great. We will find out that there was nothing untoward, nothing improper, nothing concerning about these 3,000 emails between the Republican attorney general from Oklahoma and these oil and gas and coal companies. I think maybe something is in those emails. Maybe I am wrong. I hope I am wrong. For the country, for the planet, I hope I am wrong.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senators from Hawaii and Rhode Island over the course of the coming hour.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Has the Senator from Hawaii yielded the floor?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I believe that will be charged to my time, but I have asked for that to be the case.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, in this conversation about these emails, the thing that keeps striking me is that our fundamental question is, Is the individual, is the nominee, given his record in Oklahoma, going to be an advocate for the environment, an advocate for the health of the citizens of the United States of America, an advocate for upholding clean water and clean air that have done so much to improve the quality of life for Americans, or is the individual, Scott Pruitt, going to be, instead, an advocate for the oil companies and the coal companies and the gas companies? That question goes to the heart of whether the individual, Scott Pruitt, is fit to carry this responsibility.

The American people have been very pleased with the enormous changes in the quality of the environment over the last 30 or 40 years, and it has added a tremendous amount of improvement to their lives. Here we have somebody who, possibly, is not going to advocate and fulfill the responsibilities of the office but who is going to use the office as director of the EPA as an extension of the complex matrix of fossil fuel companies and work on their behalf and not on the people's behalf.

I will invite my colleagues, if they have insight or questions related to this question of whether Scott Pruitt is going to serve the interests of the people or the interests of the fossil fuel companies, to feel free to weigh in.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the Senator from Oregon.

Mr. President, I note the diagram that I am showing beside me here on the floor, which is the work of an academic professor. He is one of a considerable number of professors and researchers who are looking at the fossil fuel-funded climate-denial operation as a socioeconomic creature. They are studying it. It is rather new. This is a diagram done by Professor Robert Brulle of Drexel University, one of the many academics and researchers who are looking into what I call the denial beast, because obviously if you are ExxonMobil, if you are the Koch brothers, you don't want to be out front yourself. You want to put outfits with names that sound much more benign out there—the Heartland Institute, the George C. Marshall Institute. These groups get thrown up by the fossil fuel company, stuffed with their money, filled with their employees, and they all run around saying more or less the same thing, which is, don't worry about climate change; don't worry about our carbon emissions.

When the Senator from Oregon refers to a complex matrix that this individual serves, this is just one visual description of that complex matrix of fossil fuel interests with which he has been so closely involved.

Here is one other example. This is Mr. Pruitt's fundraising from all of these energy companies and then the different ways he raised money. Liberty 2.0 was his super PAC. We still don't know a single thing about it. We haven't talked about the dark money life of Scott Pruitt because—why?—our colleagues on the other side won't require those questions to be answered. They are perfectly willing to scoot him through without knowing a single thing about his dark money operation—his attorney general reelection, which was chaired by a fossil fuel billionaire; the Oklahoma Strong Leadership PAC, which was his leadership PAC that took constant fossil fuel money; the Rule of Law Defense Fund, which was the laundering operation for bringing money to the Republican Attorneys General Association.

If you were one of these big companies and if you could drop money into the Rule of Law Defense Fund, it would wash your identity clean of the money, and then the money could go over to the Republican Attorneys General Association as if it were a gift from the Rule of Law Defense Fund, when all they did was launder the identity off of the fossil fuel donor. Then you had, of course, the Republican Attorneys General Association, which was so loaded up with fossil fuel interests that they had special, secret, private meetings with these big donors at their retreats. It was right on the secret agenda of the retreats, which we have been able to get our hands on.

I add that to the equation because when the Senator from Oregon talks about a complex matrix of fossil fuel interests, he is not kidding. This is a very, very significant matrix of fossil fuel interests, and that is what Scott Pruitt has been serving, not the public and not his duties.

Mr. MERKLEY. My colleague from Rhode Island put up the web. Maybe ''web'' is a better word than ''matrix'' because it looks like a giant spiderweb. What is being ensnared in this spiderweb, in this web of denial, in this ''denial beast'' as you have labeled it, is the truth.

What the complex group of organizations does is to put out information from every possible direction. They hold conferences; they hold workshops; they write letters to the editor; they write opinion editorials in our newspapers; they organize research—all so that it can reverberate in a way that an ordinary citizen hears from here and here and here the same lie—the lie that it is not clear whether carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels is damaging our environment.

Here is the truth: We know very clearly the damage that is being done by burning fossil fuels, by burning natural gas, by burning coal, by burning oil, but there is so much money, so much profit, that they can build this enormous web of organizations to mislead the public, and that is half of it.

Then there is the second chart my colleague put up, which lays out these funds of dark money. This is really about the corruption of our democratic Republic. Maybe if I come over here, this will be in the same frame of reference. These funds flow through in a fashion that they contaminate the debate among citizens in election after election after election. This dark money is corrupting the very soul of our democracy—our elections.

Here is the interesting connection. Right now, a judge has ruled and said: ''There was an abject failure to provide prompt and reasonable access to documents requested.'' Our nominee is in control of these emails, his own emails. He has been stopping access to them because he has that power as attorney general of Oklahoma because he is afraid of the information the public will learn from his communications.

The lines on the chart that my colleague from Rhode Island put up showed his connection to fund after fund after fund. In his communications with these groups, which may possibly be among the communications that the judge has just said will be released to the public, wouldn't it be interesting to find out what he said related to those organizations? Was he serving the public, or was he serving the fossil fuel industry?

This information will be available next Tuesday, but the majority leader has said, essentially, that he is willing to deny Americans the right to know the truth about Scott Pruitt. He is willing to deny Americans the right to know the truth about these emails. He is willing to deny Americans the right to know about these leaks between organizations and whether Scott Pruitt served the public trust or served the fossil fuel industry, served the Koch brothers.

It is an offense to this body and it is an offense to the American citizens' right to know that we might be voting tomorrow without getting the information necessary to make a considered judgment on this nominee.

Mr. SCHATZ. Will the Senator from Oregon yield to a question?

Mr. MERKLEY. Yes.

Mr. SCHATZ. I thank the Senator from Oregon.

I have been thinking a lot about the job of the EPA Administrator. It is one of those things we have taken for granted over many, many years, that we are going to get someone who is going to sort of play it right down the middle of the fairway, but now we are forced to sort of challenge all of our assumptions with respect to what we can expect in an EPA Administrator.

When I think about the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, they are very important, especially for young people who are so passionate about the environment, as they may not know what life was like and what the environment was like before the Clean Water Act. The majority of waterways in the United States were not swimmable. You had rivers catching on fire.

I went to college in Southern California in, I guess, 1990 through 1994, and the success of the Clean Air Act is incredible. I mean, L.A. still has its smog, but because of CAFE standards, because of the Clean Air Act, because of other environmental regulations, you don't have nearly the air quality problems that you had even 20, 25 years ago, and this is a nationwide success story.

Kids had to stay home from school because of air pollution. I know everybody understands that is happening in Shanghai and in Beijing, parts of Africa, parts of the developing world, parts of the industrializing world. But 10, 20 years ago, you would have smog alerts, and kids would have to stay home from school in the United States of America. You had kids who couldn't function because of their asthma. So what is at stake is not a bird or a butterfly.

I got my start in politics because of conservation issues. I am interested in forest ecology and reef ecology, but I understand a lot of people live a different life than that, and they are not in a position to be worrying about birds and butterflies. But everybody worries about clean air and clean water.

So I was wondering if the Senator from Oregon could talk a little bit about the foundation of this debate. I saw the Senator from Rhode Island do this incredible exposition—as I have seen before, and nobody is better at this—in describing the forces behind what is going on. But I would like to talk about the premise that undergirds this debate, which is not about fossil fuel companies versus conservationists; it is about clean air versus dirty air, and it is about clean water versus dirty water.

I know that is something that the Senator from Oregon is very passionate about, and I wonder if he might comment on the basic idea of a clean and healthy environment and the bipartisan consensus that we ought to have related to that.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I appreciate the questions from my colleague from Hawaii. As we stand here tonight, I think about how Hawaii is a State completely surrounded by water. It is very vulnerable to changes in the environment, very vulnerable to the introduction of invasive species, very vulnerable to changes in the acidity of the ocean, which is affected by carbon dioxide, and very vulnerable to the rising sea level.

I appreciate so much that as a citizen of Hawaii as well as now a leader for the voice of the State here in this Chamber, he keeps going back to his fundamentals of concern for our broader environment.

As you were asking this question, I was thinking about President Richard Nixon creating the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970. He recognized that we all share ''a profound commitment to the rescue of our natural environment and the preservation of the Earth as a place both habitable by and hospitable to man.''

Well, that is a pretty clear statement that things were in trouble and we needed to operate a rescue. I think about that in the context of growing up in Oregon and, as I grew up, through my church and through my Boy Scout troop, we would go and do different projects to try to clean up messes that had been left. One of those was that we had a problem with these plastic six-pack rings that held all of the six cans together and the birds that were on the Pacific Flyway would stick their head through one of these plastic rings that would have held the top of a soda can, and they wouldn't be able to get it off, and they would end up choking or dying. Also, these plastic rings were being digested by the animals, and it was affecting them.

Then we had these flip-tops where you would open a can of soda by pulling off a triangular piece of metal and it would be a little hook that would sit on the beach or the pathway, and then somebody would step on it and cut their foot open or an animal would eat it, and this nice little curved object would tear up their throat and kill them. Those issues of: Why? Why do we have to operate with these consumer products in the fashion that are creating these specific hazards? The answer was: We didn't.

There was a bill in the Oregon legislature, and we eliminated the plastic rings that birds were sticking their heads through. And then we had a proposal—and I can't really recall if was done by initiative or by the legislature—to eliminate these flip-tops. The industry said: You cannot eliminate these flip-tops. People will not be able to open their cans of soda. It will be a terrible tragedy for America. There is no solution. You cannot touch this. Adamantly, they said: Nothing can be

done. It is an impossible problem to solve.

But we passed the law. We adopted that law, either by initiative or by the legislature, and a magical thing occurred. Within what seemed like a few days—maybe it was a few weeks—those peel-off flip-tops disappeared and were replaced by a different mechanism that opens that same triangle, but stays attached to the can.

Well, I have seen this time and again where there is a proposal where we need to improve our habits as humans, and as we are engaged in making our consumer products more complimentary to the environment, we are told: It can't be done. It will be too expensive. It will be too difficult. And then, when we say no, it can be done, and we pass a law, the solutions appear. And everyone says: Oh, that works just fine.

So now we don't have those plastic rings. Now we don't have those peel-off flip-tops that sit on the ground.

But we would go out in my Scout troop or in my church group and we would clean up and we would think that this would be so unnecessary to have these, and I saw the changes that occurred.

Then people said: What about all of these aluminum cans and glass bottles that are sitting all around here on the pathways around our State. Oregon had a strong ethic for the environment, but we were littered by all of these aluminum cans and steel cans back then, and also by glass bottles and broken glass bottles. If you have cleaned up a broken glass bottle, you know that it is real a pain to do that. And if you step on the shards from a glass bottle, you regret that somebody else shattered it and left it on the ground.

So we said: Why can't we change that? So the legislature put forward the idea and said: Let's just put a deposit on this so when you turn it in, you get 5 cents back. So we had the first bottle bill in the Nation, and that bottle bill got a huge percentage of those cans and those bottles returned that were left out in the public. And if somebody did leave something in the public space, somebody else would come along and say: There is a nickel; I will grab it and return it.

I must say that the amount of deposits in Oregon hasn't kept pace with inflation. When my kids were small, I would say: There is a bottle; grab it. There's a nickel. And they would say: It is just a nickel, Dad. A nickel isn't what it was three or four decades ago. But nonetheless, it still was an innovation that served as well.

About that same time, Oregon was worried about the developments of its beaches because we had a huge public trust with the beaches. The beaches belonged to all the people in the State, but the law was a little bit vague in this regard. But there was a provision that said that essentially public byways would remain public byways, and those beaches were established then by law in Oregon as belonging to all of the people of the State, and that access would be available to all of the people in the State. So nobody could take a piece of beach and say: This is mine. It belonged to everyone. So we gained our public beaches during that time period.

Then, someone else said: Well, look, we are seeing what is happening with congestion in some other States. And, with apologies to my fellow Senators from California, a lot of Oregonians turned to California and said: We are seeing a lot of sprawl, we are seeing a lot of congestion, and maybe we can do something about that and change the way that development occurs.

So under the governorship of Tom McCall, who, by the way, was a Republican and who, like Richard Nixon, believed in the environment—it was Richard Nixon who was President when we did the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, and we established the EPA, and it was the Republican Tom McCall who preserved the beach bill and the bottle bill and this land use planning bill that said: Let's put a boundary around each town and city, and you will not be able to build outside of that boundary so that we don't have sprawl. And some said: Well, we want to still have the right to build anything. So a compromise was struck. And it was that the tax rate outside of those boundaries would be much lower. So, with that, the farmers said: That is a sweet deal, we will take that. And the forest industry said: We will take that. Meanwhile, it meant that our city started to develop more densely with intense services, and we avoided the sprawl that had been experienced elsewhere.

I mention each of these issues—the bottle bill, the beach bill, the land use bill, the fact that we got rid of the flip-tops—because these were strategies to make us be able to operate in a more sustainable fashion, in accordance with the vision that Richard Nixon laid out when he created the Environmental Protection Agency.

Let me read that one more time. He said that we all share ''a profound commitment to the rescue of our natural environment and the preservation of the Earth as a place both habitable by and hospitable to man.''

Mr. SCHATZ. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MERKLEY. He will.

Mr. SCHATZ. Through the Chair, I would just like to ask the Senator a question. It strikes me that Governor McCall, President Nixon, I am thinking of Governor Schwarzenegger, I am thinking of SUSAN COLLINS, although I am almost sheepish to continue to single her out; it may not always be helpful to her to be singled out as the lone pro-climate person on the Republican side of the fence on this issue—but it strikes me that your beginning as an environmentalist was not based on being liberal or progressive, but your community's values, your family's values, your church's values, your Scout troop's values.

We had a really interesting lunch today with a preacher from North Carolina talking about framing political issues as moral issues. It really touched me because I am telling you, it breaks my heart to think—I mean, look, for some of these arguments about the size and the scope of the government, we just have different views on what the right size and scope and role of the Federal Government is. Some of these questions about geopolitics—tough stuff. You try to get it right. You try to have a coherent world view. Tough stuff. If you serve in the Senate long enough, you are going to get some stuff exactly right, and you may be wrong a few times.

But what really breaks my heart is to see the once-bipartisan consensus, which was based on common sense and morality that we just don't pollute our oceans, our streams, our aquifers, the air we breathe; that we try to preserve our environment for each other and for posterity; and a basic understanding that people who own businesses—especially once those businesses are incorporated and especially if those businesses are publicly traded—have a different set of imperatives. It is really hard to get each individual business that is in the mining industry or the electricity generation industry or the extraction industry or the transportation industry or the manufacturing industry to voluntarily worry every day about clean air and clean water. It is kind of like not their job. They are supposed to make stuff. They are supposed to extract stuff. They are supposed to make electronics. They are supposed to make this economy work.

So one of the ideas of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act is that we have an obligation to creation itself for those of us who are religious and for those of us who are not. That is a moral obligation, not a political obligation. We have a duty that has nothing to do with us being Democrats, and that duty doesn't stop because they decided to run for office as a Republican.

I am wondering if the Senator from Oregon could comment on the sort of degradation of the bipartisan consensus around protecting our environment, which used to be a sort of 90-percent issue, a bipartisan issue. I am wondering how the Senator from Oregon feels about that.

Mr. MERKLEY. I appreciate that question. It is something we have witnessed unfold over the last two decades. It was not that long ago Republicans—both parties—for example, would stand up and say: We have a serious threat to our planet. That threat is the temperature of the planet is increasing, that we are suffering the impacts of methane and carbon dioxide pollution, and we must address that threat, but in the last few years, we have seen a steady diminishment of Republican commitment to address that threat. What does that correspond to? It corresponds very precisely to the

growth of dark money from the fossil fuel industry.

I hate to lay out this story because it is offensive to anyone—any patriotic American who wants to see government of, by, and for the people—to hear this story about the massive corruption of our body politic by this dark money.

If I go back a few years and look at a set of campaigns the last time I ran for office, that dark money became involved in Senate campaign after Senate campaign after Senate campaign after Senate campaign, and it very much had an impact on the composition of this body. As those races were won with dark money from the fossil fuel industry, the willingness of some individuals to stand up and speak truthfully, forthcomingly, and powerfully about the challenge to the environment diminished and diminished and diminished. That really has to change. It is why we have to take on this role of dark money. It is the factor that means there is no longer a Governor McCall—a Republican who is fighting for the beach fill, a Republican who is fighting for the bottle bill, a Republican who is fighting for the land use bill to make our environment work better.

As a kid, we had rivers in Oregon you couldn't swim in, and now you can. Now, they are not perfect. They still show a touch of humankind on them, but the point pollution—the pipes full of toxic materials that went in the river—those are gone. What we have left primarily is nonpoint pollution, which is a much harder thing to tackle, but even that we are working to control through buffers and a variety of regulations to try to clean that up. We have made big improvements.

That, to my colleague from Hawaii, I would have to say is the factor that has changed this body.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MERKLEY. I will.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I draw the Senator's attention to this graphic my office has prepared which reflects certainly my recollection. When I came to the Senate, I want to say there were at least five Republican-sponsored climate change bills floating around. Senator John Warner, a Republican of Virginia, had one; Senator SUSAN COLLINS, a Republican of Maine, had one; Senator JOHN MCCAIN, a Republican of Arizona actually ran for President on a strong climate change platform; Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, a Republican of South Carolina, was working with Senator Kerry on one; Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, a Republican of Tennessee, had one.

So there was a regular heartbeat of activity in this body on climate change, a bipartisan heartbeat of activity. Then, pow, came Citizens United 2010, and it has been flatlined since. It is the power of money unleashed into our politics, and nobody plays harder and nobody plays rougher and nobody plays meaner with the power of money than the fossil fuel industry that Scott Pruitt serves.

Mr. MERKLEY. I appreciate the Senator's chart because I think it demonstrates, in a much more precise way, what I was describing, the corrupting role of dark money. Here, the Senate has illustrated how that money was really unleashed by the Citizens United decision and how the impact has been dramatic, just squelching the ability of my Republican colleagues to share this effort to create a sustainable planet.

I think, when we are asking for these emails to be reviewed before we vote, we are asking the question: Does Scott Pruitt share the mission that Richard Nixon stated when we created the Environmental Protection Agency? If you are going to head the Agency, do you share the mission? We want to know whether Scott Pruitt has, in Richard Nixon's words, ''a profound commitment to the rescue of our natural environment.'' We want to know whether Scott Pruitt has a profound commitment to the preservation of the Earth as a place habitable to mankind. We want to know whether he has a commitment to the preservation of the Earth as hospitable to mankind.

Henry David Thoreau kind of summed it up like this: What use is a house if you don't have a tolerable planet to put it on? That is a good question. It is a commitment to the fact that where we live is just not the house, the structure of our bedroom and our kitchen and dining room, where we live is on this beautiful blue-green planet. That is our home, and we must care for it just as we do the structure of our house.

When I ask this question: Is Scott Pruitt committed to the mission of rescuing our natural environment, I think there will be answers to that in these emails. That is why we should see these emails, as the judge has said that we should see those emails. He said there was an abject failure to provide prompt and reasonable access. By whom? The person who blocked it was the attorney general of Oklahoma, who is the nominee whose record we are examining—the attorney general of Oklahoma. The reason this body hasn't had these emails, the reason the American public has not been able to answer the question: Are you committed to the mission of the Environmental Protection Agency, is because Scott Pruitt prevented us from being able to answer that question.

He has been quite clear in other circumstances which amplify our concerns. On the Agency he has been nominated to lead, he describes himself as a ''leading advocate against the EPA's activist agenda.'' Just with those words, we sense a certain hostility to the work the EPA does to try to clean up the air, clean up the water, and hold polluters accountable. Activists. Isn't it a good thing to fulfill the mission you are charged with doing? It is not a pejorative. It is an important commitment to work hard to fulfill the responsibilities of the office.

That is one piece of evidence, but here is another. Devon Energy sent a letter to Scott Pruitt and said: Would you please make this the position of your office and address it to the Environmental Protection Agency, to the Honorable Lisa Jackson, head of the EPA.

Here is the letter as it was sent to Scott Pruitt by Devon Energy, saying: Won't you take our position as your position. Here is the letter that was sent on. This is the first page. There was a longer amount to it. As we can see, these paragraphs in yellow were lifted 100 percent over here into the letter. There was one sentence that was dropped out in the course of this lengthy letter. I think it is less than 5 percent of the letter was dropped out. Essentially, he took their letter and printed it on his stationery as the position of the attorney general on behalf of the people of the State of Oklahoma.

So I asked him in the hearing whether he felt he was representing Devon Energy and making his office an extension of this corporation or whether he was serving the people of the State. He had earlier said he would like to hear from everyone and get all sides of something. He said: Well, I consider, in printing Devon's letter as Oklahoma's attorney general's letter, simply advocating for an industry that is important to Oklahoma—so making the oil position the position of the attorney general's office.

I said: Well, earlier you stated that you liked to hear the various sides of an issue and consider the input. Whom else did you talk to about this issue before you simply took the position of the oil company?

The answer was: No one.

So we can only conclude that, at least in this one instance, the nominee before us didn't look out to the people he was representing as attorney general. He didn't look after the body of law, the body of opinion, the body of effects. He didn't consult with anyone, except one organization—Devon Energy.

I must say, this is evidence, at this moment, of not serving the people, as an officer of the people is committed to do, but serving a company. So is this an anomaly or is this essentially the way he operated day in and day out? The answer is in the emails that we do not have. That is why it is a travesty if we vote tomorrow without getting those emails next Tuesday and enabling the public to examine them.

We normally have 30 hours of debate postcloture after we officially close debate. We don't quite close it but say there is another 30 hours of debate. That is what we are in right now, and that is why we are here tonight. Wouldn't it make sense to suspend this debate until after the citizens of the United States of America have a chance to pour through those emails and know the answer? Is this what we

can expect; that we will have an Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency who is serving Devon Energy and the Koch brothers and this dark money cartel or is he going to serve the citizens of the United States of America? That is what we want to know the answer to.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MERKLEY. I will.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. One of the points I think could be made here with respect to the emails is that the first tranche of emails—the ones the judge instructed be released on Tuesday—are communications with Scott Pruitt's donors, with Devon Energy right here, with Peabody coal—which I don't see on the list—and with API, the American Petroleum Institute, which is right here. That funding has gone into his political operation.

It is worth understanding how that pays off. I don't know if we can see this, but this says ''confidential.'' I don't know if that is clear on the screen. This is the confidential agenda for a Republican Attorneys General Association meeting, at a nice place—the Greenbrier in West Virginia. It is pretty swish. Look here on the agenda: Private meeting with Murray Energy. There is Murray Energy, right in the energy donors. He is attorney general. Look at what they get—a private meeting with the Republican attorneys general on the confidential agenda. If you go to the next day, the morning meeting is an issue briefing on the dangerous consequences of the Clean Power Plan and other EPA rules, and guess who the lead panelist is—Attorney General Scott Pruitt of Oklahoma.

What you have is this link between a big political donor, Murray Energy, and a private meeting for Murray Energy on the confidential agenda and a followup meeting at the same retreat on attacking the Clean Power Plan. And guess who a lead plaintiff with Scott Pruitt is in the lawsuit against the Clean Power Plan? Boom—Murray Energy.

There is a little machine here that turns between money in from the fossil fuel industry and litigation out on behalf of the fossil fuel industry. These emails aren't just matters of general interest. These emails may provide some good connection, some good evidence into what exactly that little feedback loop entails, because there are plenty of circumstances, and, as somebody who spent years as an attorney general and years as the U.S. Attorney, those little feedback loops is sometimes called corruption.

Depending on what those emails say, that could easily be prosecutable corruption. Rather than answer that question, of whether this link between big donors and action on cases using the badge of the State of Oklahoma as a shield to protect the fossil fuel interests, which were the donors, and talking about it in confidential meetings, in private meetings on confidential agendas—to me, that smells pretty high all by itself, before you have actually dug into it and seen what the emails say and gotten to the potentially really stinky part.

The fact that this is being jammed through is not without consequence for the Republicans on the other side who are not being given the chance by their leadership to say: Hold it. Whistle. Let's give this a couple of weeks. Let's see if there is something beyond how bad it is already—that perhaps might even make this chargeable stuff—before we are forced to vote on this guy.

Once again, the fact that they are being forced to vote on this guy in this circumstance is very, very unusual behavior. And unusual behavior, to me, signals powerful forces.

I could not agree more with the Senator from Oregon about the importance of these emails and their potential significance. I agree with my friend from Hawaii that I hope there isn't anything really bad here, but the likelihood that there is is very strong. The dogs are hunting.

Mr. MERKLEY. One of the things that I want to return to is why we are so concerned about this complex matrix of corruption, of dark money changing the outcome of campaigns, changing the makeup of the Senate, changing the type of rules that are adopted and the laws that are passed, because behind it all is a rising tide of pollution that is changing the chemistry of our air and changing the temperature of our planet.

This is a very simple chart here, and this shows temperature and carbon dioxide. If we look at this carefully, you can see that the carbon dioxide rises and the temperature rises. This is what has happened. The scientists have looked back hundreds of thousands of years. Carbon dioxide goes down, and the temperature goes down. Carbon dioxide goes up, and the temperature goes up because carbon dioxide is essentially a blanket.

If you increase the thickness of that blanket—that is, the density of the carbon dioxide—more heat is trapped on the Earth's surface. When we realize the age of the Earth, which is measured in billions of years, the time that we have been here in human civilization is pretty brief. And the time that we have been burning fossil fuels for energy is very brief—150 years—a very small blink of the eye.

In that time, we have changed the chemistry of the air. We have increased the size and the weight of the blanket substantially. Prior to the burning of coal, for many thousands of years, the carbon dioxide level had varied up and down, but the top level was 280 parts per million. That is this blue line.

What we see is that the carbon dioxide level has steadily climbed as we burn the coal, the natural gas, and the oil. As we have done that, the black line is going up and down. It has varied a little bit from year to year. It has steadily increased as well.

There are many folks who look at this and say that is just lines on a chart. If you project into the future, that is just a computer model. It can have different assumptions, and you can tweak that computer model. But this is a powerful, powerful explanation of facts on the ground that we are seeing every day.

Let's look at the facts on the ground. Let's set aside the computer models. Let's even set aside this chart showing temperature rising as the carbon dioxide levels rise.

What do we see in my home State of Oregon? What we see is that we have warmer winters, and those warmer winters mean that the pine beetles don't die off in the same way they do when there is a very cold winter. So they come out, and they attack more trees and more trees are killed. That is damaging to our forests. We see that effect.

What else do we see? We see a change in forest fires. Our forest fire season has grown enormously, by more than 2 months over about the last 40 years. Two months is a big additional portion of the year with fires raging, and the fires have been more intense. Partly, they are more intense simply because the forest is different.

The old-growth forests were more resistant to fire than the second-growth forests, and that is a result of our logging practices. In addition, there is the dryness of the forest. The forest is more dry. Sometimes the wood on the floor of the forest is as dry as a kiln-dried two-by-four. Then we have these weather patterns that involve more lightning, and there are more lightning strikes that are starting fires. So we have drier forests.

We have more lightning strikes. We have more dead trees, and we have more damage from these fires. We see a significant impact on our forest. How about on our farming? Farming depends on water. We have had three worst ever droughts in the Klamath Basin over the last decade and a half—three worst ever droughts. It had a huge impact on ranching in that basin and a huge impact on farming in that basin.

As we see that impact, we realize that on the frontline—on the very frontline—in the battle with rising temperatures is rural America, where we have industries that depend on our natural resources, on our forests, on our fishing, and on our farming.

Let's turn to our fishing for a moment. As the winters have gotten warmer, we have seen that in most winters—not in all but in most winters—the snowpack has been decreasing. What does that do? Partly, it affects farming because you have less water stored in the form of the snowpack, but it also affects the mountain streams. So you have warmer, smaller mountain streams for trout and for salmon.

For those who love to fish in Oregon—and so many people do love to

fish in Oregon; in fact, people come from many parts of the world to come and fish in Oregon—you now have streams that are less hospitable for that purpose.

Let's think about what is happening on the coast of Oregon. On the coast, we are a Pacific Rim State. We have the vast Pacific Ocean. Ponder this question. Is it possible that you could burn so much coal and so much oil and so much natural gas in 150 years that you could put so much carbon dioxide into the air, that the ocean could absorb a good share of that, and you could change the chemistry of the ocean?

I have to tell you this. Apologies to my colleague from Hawaii. This is the most beautiful coastline on the planet. You have these incredible mountains dashing into the ocean. You have these gorgeous Pacific waters. You have all kinds of wildlife, all kinds of fishing industry. The Oregon coast is one of the most spectacular places in the world. I must say that, in fairness, I have really enjoyed seeing the Hawaii coastline as well. It is different. It is beautiful and rugged in a different way, but spectacular.

There you are on the coast of Oregon, and you are looking out from those mountains that come crashing into the sea. We have capes—one cape after another. The cape is a big projection of land. You can stand on top of those capes, and you can see out to the horizon of the ocean. You can't see any land. You realize you can only see about 20 miles with the curvature of the Earth, but you know that the ocean goes on and on, far more than a thousand miles. And you say: That is a lot of water. That is an incredible amount of water on the planet Earth. It surely can't be possible that we have changed the basic chemistry of the ocean through the burning of carbon dioxide.

Then you talk to the marine biologists who measure what makes up the Pacific Ocean, and they tell you: You know what, the burning of coal and oil and natural gas is changing our ocean in a way that is making it less hospitable to life.

Here is what they are talking about. The ocean through wave action absorbs that carbon dioxide that we have been putting into the Earth. In fact, the carbon dioxide level in the air would be much, much higher if it weren't for the oceans pulling a good deal of it out. And then, in the water of the ocean, the carbon dioxide becomes carbonic acid.

When you hear the word ''acid,'' you say: Well, that doesn't sound very good. And you are right. That acid, then, has an impact on the ability of marine organisms to create shells. One specific example of this are the oysters on the Oregon coast. The oysters, as little babies, start to pull molecules out of the water and form shells. If the water is more acidic, it is much more difficult for them to do that, and the result is they die. They put all their energy into that effort. They can't do it. So they die.

In about 2008—the year I was running for office—we had this big die-off of baby oysters in the hatchery on the Oregon coast. It was a big scientific puzzle: What is causing this? What is the virus or the bacterium that is causing this?

The scientists got together, and with a lot of help from Oregon State University, the industry got together and they studied this, and they couldn't find that there was a virus causing this action. They started looking for a bacterium. Well, they looked. They didn't find that either.

What else could it be? It has to be one disease agent or another. It turned out that it wasn't a disease agent. It was the increasing acidity of the Pacific Ocean.

Now, this morning, the owner of that hatchery happened to be coming through DC and came to my ''Good Morning Oregon'' reception. I hold this every Thursday morning that I am here. People can show up. We have a little bit of good Oregon coffee and a warm chance to reacquaint ourselves with old friends and to hear what folks who are visiting are thinking. He said to me this morning: Buffering is now continuous.

What did he mean by that? What he meant was, when they discovered it was the acidity that was killing the baby oysters, they had to start taking this seawater—they have a big pipe that pulls seawater up into the oyster hatchery, and they have another pipe that recirculates it back into the ocean. They had to start artificially reducing the acidity of the seawater so the baby oysters could thrive. What he said this morning is: We now have to buffer continuously. The condition has become so bad, it is bad on any given day. So that is where we are.

If the acidity of the ocean has changed from the burning of coal and oil and natural gas, isn't it time for us to wake up and pay attention? Isn't it time for us, as the stewards of the environment here in terms of making laws, to be paying attention? Shouldn't we be thinking again about those words that President Richard Nixon said when he created the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970; that we all ''share a profound commitment to the rescue of our natural environment.''

How are we going to rescue our natural environment from the harm of burning fossil fuels if we keep burning fossil fuels? That is the question before us, and the answer is that we can't. We have to stop.

We have to, in a modest period of time, a rather short period of time—really, in the course of human civilization, just a microsecond of time—we have to move from burning fossil fuels to basing our economy on energy from clean and renewable sources. We have to do this very conscientiously. We have to do it through grassroots action. We have to do it through a framework that we create here at the national level. Both are powerful. Let's do both.

In the middle of that is the Environmental Protection Agency. That is why it is so important that we have a Director of the EPA who is committed to the vision of rescuing our natural environment, and that is why we need to have access to these thousands of emails before we vote in the U.S. Senate.

I think that as we consider this, we need to ponder that the conditions we see in Oregon—that are derived from global warming, increasing temperatures—are not simply happening in my State. I used those examples because I come from Oregon. I represent Oregon. You can see these things right where I am, but you can look across our Nation, you can look across our planet, and see the effects everywhere.

If you take the 100 largest glaciers in the world and track their average retreat, it is dramatic. There are those, by the way, who say if you want to see a glacier at Glacier National Park, you better go soon because a number of glaciers in Glacier National Park have retreated substantially.

You can go to other parts of the country and see other impacts. For example, if you go to the Northeast, you have the challenge—just like the pine needles aren't being killed in the winter, the ticks aren't being killed, and the ticks are infesting the moose, and the moose are dying because you have these big clumps of ticks sucking the blood from the adults and from the babies. The list goes on.

Our colleague from Maine says: We are concerned about our lobsters. Our lobsters are migrating up the coast to find a temperature of water that used to be in Maine, and now they are moving north toward Canada.

You can talk to those who track insects, like certain types of mosquitoes that carry the Zika virus, and their range is spreading. There is an insect called a sandfly that thrives in Central America, that is starting to show up in the United States of America because the temperature is changing, and that sandfly carries a disease called leishmania. This disease basically is extraordinarily difficult to cure, and it is a single-cell parasite. When you get bit by a sandfly, you get an enormous number, if it is an infected sandfly, of these parasites that start eating a hole either in your organs or in your skin—very difficult to cure.

As I describe this, I am just touching the surface. I haven't talked about the Great Barrier Reef, much of which has died over the last couple of years off Australia, and the list goes on and on.

So to close, we need a Director of the Environmental Protection Agency who has that profound commitment to the rescue of our natural environment, and the preservation of the Earth as a place habitable by and hospitable to humankind. That is why we need the emails,

and that is why this vote should be delayed until they have been examined fully by the public.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, very good to see you. I want to again, as I stated in the past, thank the staff. We are obviously pushing late into the night, and there are unsung heroes who are here in the U.S. Senate working in a nonpartisan way, keeping the Senate going. I want to thank them all for being here tonight. Definitely, the folks who are typing with their fingers are heroic. They have muscles in them. Thank you very much for your work. Of course, I want to just highlight the pages and thank them for yet another late night, when they still have calculus homework, I am sure, to work on.

Mr. President, I am honored to be able to join my colleagues, three of whom themselves are some of the great voices, in my opinion, in the United States on issues of the environment, issues of protecting the health and safety of our communities: Senators MERKLEY, WHITEHOUSE, and SCHATZ. I am grateful to be able to stand with them, joining them in a chorus of conviction about our opposition to the nomination of Scott Pruitt to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA is a critical Federal Agency. It was established through an Executive order by President Nixon and charged with the protection of human health and the protection of the environment. Given the pressing health issues, environmental challenges we face in our Nation, and frankly the growing environmental challenges around our planet today, we should make sure we are confirming an Administrator who has a conviction for the protection of the health and safety of people; that he or she prioritizes the well-being of Americans and is focused tirelessly, exhaustively, on making sure the mission of the Agency is made real, that other factors, conflicts, wealth of industries—that their No. 1 concern is not all of those things but is really the health and safety of people, of Americans, because we know what it means when the health or safety of Americans is undermined.

This idea of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is completely compromised if cancer rates are going up because of toxic dumps or superfunds or asthma rates are epidemic because of toxins in the air.

We need a person who is in charge of making sure we are not prioritizing polluters or industries; that we are prioritizing people first and their safety. This is not just a moral calling of this Agency, but it is actually a practical one too. It is an economic one, too, because the cost to society of pollution, we already know, is extraordinarily high.

I see this in the community where I live. I am a proud resident of Newark, NJ, but I see a polluted river, the Passaic River, that has caused health issues, that has taken away sports and recreation, actually taken away a source of bounty of fish and clams and other shellfish. In addition to that, now it is costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up the waste and mess that was made by corporations that were allowed to get away with that polluting. That is the common sense of this.

Not only is it an issue of justice—something our country stands for, this ideal of justice—not only is it compromising life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but it also ultimately costs us so much more not to be vigilant in the protection of our environment. It is actually stealing, as we have seen all across this country—stealing from future generations. As you pollute now, you are stealing from future generations and calling it profit.

So this is what I see as a person who is in charge of this Agency, someone who is putting health, common sense, pragmatism before the short-term avarice that often has undermined the great bounty of this Nation.

In this particular case, in this moment in time, with this Agency started by a Republican, we now have a President who is not only putting someone up who is singularly unqualified—and as a person who worked with EPA Administrators, Republican and Democratic, we had a great Republican Governor from New Jersey who was the head of the EPA. Republicans and Democrats, if you compare this person, it is my conviction that he is singularly unqualified to lead the Environmental Protection Agency at this moment. That is Scott Pruitt.

I do not believe Scott Pruitt will lead this Agency in a way that upholds this critical mission in our country. Again, I don't care if you are in a so-called red State or so-called blue State, I don't care what your background is, your religion, your race, if you are living in an environment that is toxic—the air, the water—it is undermining your ability to enjoy the liberty and the freedom and justice of our country.

So if you look at this individual, Scott Pruitt, if you look at his track record, you will see that his actual work has undermined the mission of the Agency that he is now nominated to lead.

At his confirmation hearing, Scott Pruitt stated, as attorney general for the State of Oklahoma, he was responsible for protecting the welfare of Oklahoma citizens. This was his statement. Yet during his 6 years as attorney general, Scott Pruitt spent his time doing the bidding of the polluters, and filing or joining 14 lawsuits against the EPA's effort to clean up the air and water of a State, challenging water and clean air rules.

On top of this, on top of his track record, not for doing things to improve the quality of the air and water but doing things consistently to fight the EPA—on top of this, on one of the largest issues going on with our planet right now, Mr. Pruitt says clearly that he denies the science and the reality of climate change.

So many in his own community who have come to this building to give their voice and their facts believe this person being nominated has a nonexistent record in Oklahoma when it comes to protecting the environment and that he actually aided and abetted many of the people who were doing some of the worst harm to the water and to the air.

Mr. Pruitt seems to say this is a philosophical thing; that he is a Federalist. What amazed me, as I dealt with Mr. Pruitt, engaged with him during the hearings, is it exposed the fact that he not only tried to get the Federal Government to stop acting to clean up the air and water and constrain the avaristic polluting of these industries, but he actually worked to make sure the State government didn't have the power to do it as well, as I will show momentarily.

But here is somebody who is not into philosophy. The driving force is his picking polluters over people. Mr. Pruitt also has serious conflicts of interest. What is amazing to me is that he has stonewalled the Senate, claiming to us that all of the emails from his agency that should be open—listen, we went through a whole Presidential campaign with all of this talk about email. How ironic is it that we are now putting someone up for EPA Administrator who suddenly is not allowing open public record requests to view his emails.

This is hiding, as Senator WHITEHOUSE has gone through—not allowing the public to see what is their right to see—the emails and communications he has had with polluting industries, as well as other organizations plowing money into his campaign and others. Not only has he denied us access to that, but he has used lies that this could not be produced.

Well, we have just had a judge in Oklahoma, contrary to what he said, force the viewing of these emails. This is really important. Here is a judge who literally calls his failure to release the emails an abject failure, that not releasing these emails in accordance to the public information laws of the State—the judge called it an ''abject failure'' to not produce this information and called it ''unreasonable under the law''; those are the quotes—and ordered him to release these thousands of emails, to release the first tranche on Tuesday.

These are records pertaining to communications with Devon Energy, Peabody Coal, and other organizations. These should be released on Tuesday. We are going to see a lot in these emails.

Then he was ordered to release another tranche to organizations like ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council that supports a tremendous amount of partisan policy, the

State Policy Network, and other organizations. Those will be released in 10 days.

By the way, the requests for those go back to April 27, 2016. So one thing I have to say that I object to—and actually I am shocked and appalled that, suddenly, when you have a judge now forcing the release of these emails, which are going to give us transparency, which are going to answer the questions many of us have been asking about the conflicts he might have and how he used or potentially abused his power working in collusion with private industry, we can now see all of this plainly. But suddenly, now, this vote on Mr. Pruitt has been scheduled for tomorrow. Why not wait to let the Senators who have been asking for these emails for months—now that we are finally getting them, why are we now rushing a vote before we get to analyze his record?

So for these reasons—his lack of qualifications, his demonstration of working against the mission of the Agency, his denial of something as important and significant and planetarily consequential as climate change, his clear demonstration of his work on behalf of polluting industries, and the potential for serious conflicts of interest—we should not only oppose him, but at the very least what we should be asking is to have the vote postponed until the transparency that has been requested by Senators is achieved.

Any of these deficiencies individually should have us move the vote or vote against, but let me take some of these issues now. Let me look right now at the issue of climate change and his positions. The EPA is the most important Agency in the United States in the fight against climate change. Through its authority under the Clean Air Act, the EPA is tasked with regulating harmful air pollutants, including carbon dioxide.

I do not believe that Scott Pruitt will adhere to this EPA mandate. It is an EPA mandate that he has shown a disregard for that he will be tasked with enforcing. He not only has no record of enforcing it, but even believing in the harm that these pollutants can cause. He has openly questioned the need for climate change action on numerous occasions. He is on the record for pondering whether climate change is even happening at all.

Less than a year ago, he told a public audience the debate about climate change is just that, a debate. He has said that climate change is a religious belief and a political bumper sticker. Scott Pruitt appeared to walk back that language on climate denial during his confirmation hearing before the committee of jurisdiction, the Environment and Public Works Committee, last month. He claims that science tells us that the climate is changing, and human activity in some manner impacts climate change. The human ability to measure with precision the extent of that impact is subject to continuous debate and dialogue, as well it should be.

Well, I am happy to see that he is moving. But here Mr. Pruitt now is taking a different tactic. He is acknowledging that our climate is changing, without accepting the scientific consensus that human activity is the primary cause. But this seemingly softer language is actually a damaging tactic and in many ways is just as damaging as outright climate denial.

This is a hallmark of the new strategy: Hey, let's admit the climate is changing, but let's try to cast doubt on whether human activity is doing it. The language may be different, but the implication is the same: If we don't know how much human activity contributes to climate change, hey, then we don't need to do anything about the crisis.

This reminds me of Big Tobacco. There were these big tobacco scientists who made their living insisting that the link between cigarettes and lung cancer was uncertain. To cast doubt on it was their strategy—that link between lung cancer and smoking. This is a strategy we have seen before, again and again and again. Even though there is a consensus of science about smoking—or in the case of climate change—cast doubt, cast doubt. That is what Scott Pruitt does; he is a merchant of doubt when it comes to climate change.

He is attempting to sow uncertainty where there is, in fact, considerable certainty. As a result, he is deliberately undermining and misrepresenting the reality of the case. This is the person we want to put—who is intended by the President to be put at the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, someone who is a merchant of doubt.

Well, let me just go through the climate change evidence. Let's be clear about the facts. There are extraordinary indicators to provide strong evidence not just for climate change but for rapid, human-caused climate change. Atmospheric carbon dioxide now is higher than at any point in recorded history; 15 of the 16 warmest years on record have occurred since 2001; the pace of global sea level rise has doubled in the last decade; surface ocean acidity has increased by 30 percent since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

Those are dramatic changes in what is happening to our oceans. The evidence of this is global, from the bleaching of reefs to the killing of the biomass, to the extinction of species.

Arctic sea ice is declining by over 13 percent per decade. Just yesterday, scientists published a large research synthesis that has detected a decline in the amount of dissolved oxygen in oceans around the world, a long-predicted result of climate change that is expected to have severe consequences for the marine ecosystem and fisheries.

Some 97 percent of the actively published climate scientists agree that these climate change trends—I would say crises—are extremely likely due to human activity. Scientists this month released an estimate that human activity is causing the climate to change 170 times faster than natural forces alone would cause.

I just sat with an incredible author who wrote ''The Sixth Extinction,'' a book that documents the rapidity with which we are now in a period of global climatic extinction, with species disappearing from the planet Earth at a speed that she compared, in the larger perspective of time, to the impact of a massive asteroid that was one of the major extinction periods. This is happening rapidly, like no period before in history, except that of massive climactic events like the asteroid hitting Earth. This is a crisis. The crisis is already being felt in terms of human impacts. Right now, we know that, unabated, these climate trends will continue to have impacts, and they will grow more devastating for our planet, especially for our children and our grandchildren.

By 2045, some east coast cities could flood three times a week. Scott Pruitt's home State may not have to worry about this, but New Jersey, a coastal State—we now have everyone from people in the military to businesses, to leaders in government, all realizing that this is going to have a serious effect on our State and we have to start preparing now to deal with that crisis.

Weather patterns are going to become more erratic. Hurricanes and other major storms in the North Atlantic will become stronger and more intense. Drought and heat waves will increase in parts of Arizona, California, Texas, and, yes, even Oklahoma could exceed 100 degrees for over 120 days a year. The U.S. crop yields will drop significantly. Estimates suggest that under a business-as-usual scenario, by 2100, wheat yields could drop 20 percent, maize by 40 percent, soybeans 40 percent, causing global spikes in food prices.

The rising seas, with more intense storms and worsening drought, could create climate refugees. In fact, we are seeing climate refugees already form small island states. The United States is already facing the reality, with many of these people from around the globe, that several communities in low-lying coastal areas in Alaska and Louisiana are in the process of relocating to higher ground. It is happening right now, where you are seeing evacuations from coastal areas that are no longer habitable.

Regarding climate refugees, I would like to quote Pope Francis. He said:

> Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by the phenomenon related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystem services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters. Their access to social services and protection is very limited.

The Pope continues:

There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying the legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to their suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world.

All of this—and perhaps lastly—it is this global insecurity that will grow. Major climate events like drought and floods have clearly been linked to violent conflicts around the globe. Climate extremes are worsening tensions in some parts of the world. There is a widespread international scientific agreement on the scope of this problem and international urgency about doing something about it.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has unequivocally concluded that there is a clear human influence on the climate system. To keep global temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius, the IPCC estimates that we need to reduce emissions by 40 to 70 percent by 2050, compared to the 2010 levels. Warming beyond this level, 2 degrees Celsius, is often cited as that threshold.

Warming beyond this level will result in surface temperatures above anything our planet has experienced in the last 100,000 years. Given current emissions scenarios, keeping temperature increases below this 2-degree threshold will be extremely challenging, but this only underscores the urgent need for rapid and dramatic emissions reductions.

Unsurprisingly, given these numbers, there is also an international agreement on the need for action. We are seeing people come together and make strong commitments. In 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever binding global climate change agreement in Paris. The national commitments established in the Paris Agreement would put us on a trajectory to limit warming to 2.7 degrees Celsius—not enough of a limit, but it is a start. It is a start and a remarkable moment in planetary cooperation.

There is no question that given planetary cooperation, there is no question that given a consensus of scientists, there is no question that, given the factual urgencies being created by climate change, Scott Pruitt is on the wrong side of history in refusing to acknowledge global scientific and political consensus on climate change and the urgency that we need to act. We are potentially going to put someone who stands against this global consensus in charge of the EPA.

Much of the opposition to climate action in our country is motivated by false narratives about economic costs—people who are selling this idea that somehow doing the responsible thing is going to hurt our economy. The idea that addressing climate change could actually make us less of a wealthy nation is propaganda, and it is propaganda that is being pushed by the people who are doing significant amounts of the polluting, the people whom Scott Pruitt has spent time advocating on behalf of.

Last year, Mr. Pruitt parroted the argument that fighting climate change is bad for the economy. He parroted that on an Oklahoma radio station, arguing that climate action is ''hurting our ability to manufacture, to grow our economy, it's hurting the fossil fuel industry, it's an assault, and it's all done outside of the Constitution and the law, which makes it even more egregious.''

That is a strong statement. Besides the fact that addressing climate change is very much within the law, this economic devastation narrative is simply patently false. Just last month, a renowned climate economist who had long argued that emissions reductions would damage economic growth actually changed his mind after running a more accurate analysis of carbon dioxide's impact on temperature.

In fact, responding to climate change will help grow new parts of our economy. Last year, nearly half a million Americans were employed in whole or in part by the solar energy and wind energy industries. Wind energy jobs grew by 32 percent in 2016, and solar jobs grew by 25 percent. Solar jobs, in fact, have tripled since 2010. We should be focusing on actively expanding our promising clean energy sector. Frankly, we should be racing, as the great Nation of innovation that we are, to lead in these areas and not let our competitors get there first. We should be doing the breakthroughs, making the investments, growing the jobs.

Scott Pruitt is one of the last standoffs. In fact, the GOP—the Republican Party—is the only major political party in the developed world that refuses to acknowledge that climate change poses a problem. All of our other allies—their right parties, their left parties; you name it—all the other major political parties on the planet Earth recognize that this is a problem, but it is unconscionable that we, here in America, are still pushing a narrative that is contrary to the global consensus and the consensus of science, that denies the reality of human-caused climate change and the urgent need for action.

Recent polling says that nearly 8 out of 10 registered voters—people on the right and the left, especially with our millennial generation—support regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant. Seven out of 10 registered voters support setting strict carbon dioxide limits on coal-fired powerplants, a core aspect of the Clean Power Plan that Scott Pruitt and the Trump administration have vowed to repeal. Seven out of 10 registered voters think the United States should participate in the Paris Agreement, another critical moment where the planet was coming together in cooperation. Seven out of 10 voters agree that we should be a part of the global movement to cooperate on dealing with climate change.

Nothing in Scott Pruitt's record as Oklahoma attorney general suggests he will uphold Americans' desire for climate action. A public servant who abides by the wishes of polluting industries, instead of the wishes of the American people, instead of the real tangible health challenges in their own State—someone who is standing with the industries and contrary to people suffering in their own State—has not earned the right to be our Administrator of the EPA.

Look at his record in Oklahoma. Well, let's just start with air pollution. At his confirmation hearing, I asked Scott Pruitt if he knew how many children in his State had asthma. He did not know. So I informed him. According to the data published by the American Lung Association, more than 111,000 children in Oklahoma—more than 10 percent of all the children in Oklahoma, so more than 1 out of every 10 children in Oklahoma—has asthma. This is one of the highest State asthma rates in the Nation. This is a crisis.

As former mayor of Newark, I know the devastating impact that asthma has on parents and children. This is the number one health-related reason why kids miss school not only in my city, not only around my State—it is still one of the top reasons, if not the top—but in our Nation.

I have talked to parents and teachers about this crisis, about kids who are struggling to breathe, children rushed to emergency rooms, children missing school. This is literally undermining kids' ability to succeed in school and to get the benefits of life from academic success.

In a State where more than 1 out of every 10 kids—a State where more than 10 percent of your children—have asthma, clean air should be an urgency.

So what did Scott Pruitt do, as it relates to air pollution? Well, he actually took every major possible opportunity to help the polluters, joining with them to block the EPA from taking action to clean up the air and protect the children in his State.

When I say ''joining with them,'' and that is not a hyperbolic exaggeration. Scott Pruitt sent a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency in 2011, accusing Federal regulators of grossly overestimating the amount of air pollution that natural gas companies were releasing from well sites in Oklahoma. The letter was sent to the EPA on Mr. Pruitt's official attorney general letterhead. So we might assume its contents represented the State's official stance on what was best for the welfare of Oklahoma families and children because, as he testified, his job was to represent what was best for the welfare of Oklahoma's families and children.

This is what he said in his testimony here in the Senate. This is what he said. That was his job. So he is writing a letter, challenging the EPA, saying they grossly overestimated the amount

of air pollution that natural gas companies were releasing.

Well, the problem is that we would be wrong if we had thought that this was something that his office came up with. No, what Mr. Pruitt did was actually take a letter written by lobbyists at Devon Energy, one of the State's largest oil and gas companies, change maybe a few words—maybe three, maybe four—and, basically, took these words, took off their letterhead, put the same letter on his letterhead, and passed it along to the EPA.

Remember, Devon Energy is one of those organizations that we want the emails from, back and forth between his office.

Now, did he go out from his position and do research on air quality? Did he interview families with asthma? Did he test air quality? How did he come up with his conclusions that what the EPA was doing was wrong?

Well, clearly he couldn't write his own letters. He just took the information from Devon Energy, put it on his letterhead, and sent it off. He was doing the bidding of one of the people, one of the companies that was undermining the air quality for the 1 out of 10 children that have asthma.

So we, as U.S. Senators, who believe in thorough vetting—we hear a lot about intense vetting for refugees; I am a guy who just wants a thorough vetting for nominees—asked for his communications, using public FOIA, or the Freedom of Information Act. What are your communications with this company that seems to be writing your letters for you?

What he said to us was—he stonewalled: I can't get those things to you.

Well, thank God a judge in Oklahoma has now ordered him to release it, calling a failure to do so an abject failure.

Well, great, we are going to see the letters to understand what kind of cooperation or even collusion he had with these companies, but we are going to see them too late because the vote is tomorrow. We are going to get that information a day, 2 days, a few days too late.

So here is someone who says his job, as attorney general, was to represent the welfare of children and families. Here we have a State with a crisis in air quality, a crisis in asthma, and where the EPA is working to do something about air quality in the State, and he is coming to conclusions that we don't know if they are his or not, but we know there are industries that do not want to change their practices at all and want to continue to pollute the air.

Whose side is Scott Pruitt on—the side of the children in his State, 1 out of every 10 who has asthma, or of Devon Energy? And we want to put him in charge of the EPA, without even having a thorough understanding of what his relationship was with these companies.

Well, my colleague did his own exhaustive research about the campaign funding he had received and more support from companies like this, and it creates an implication. Well, let's get to the bottom of what is happening. Let's see the emails before we vote. What do these say to these corporations?

I asked him: He allowed polluting companies to write emails to the EPA on his letterhead; did he let any children with asthma or their parents write letters that he then just put on his letterhead—people who were suffering from the poor air quality?

Later, the director of government relations at Devon Energy emailed Mr. Pruitt's office—this, we do know—to express gratitude to the attorney general for sending the letter.

Beyond this note of thanks, there were other clear benefits of this type of behavior for Mr. Pruitt. Energy industry lobbyists and executives worked tirelessly to help Mr. Pruitt raise his profile as president of the Republican Attorneys General Association. As president of this nationwide group, Mr. Pruitt set up something called the Rule of Law Defense Fund, a super PAC that allowed corporations benefiting from the actions of Mr. Pruitt and other Republican attorneys general to make unlimited and anonymous donations. This super PAC raised $16 million in essentially untraceable fundraising in 2014 alone.

Companies were partnering with him to fight the EPA in its efforts to fight for cleaner air in a State with children struggling from widespread asthma challenges. This would be bad enough, but this in many ways is only the beginning of Mr. Pruitt's collaborations with air polluting corporations. Scott Pruitt filed two lawsuits challenging the EPA mercury and air toxics standards.

So the EPA is working to clean up mercury. He filed lawsuits against the EPA to stop them. These were the first Federal standards to require powerplants to limit their emissions of such toxic air pollutants. The EPA's final rule set standards for known hazardous air pollutants emitted by coal- and oil-fired powerplants above a certain generating capacity.

This rule sought to limit Americans' exposure to airborne toxics like mercury. Mercury in the air settles on the surfaces of water and land where rain washes it further into surface water. Once in the water, mercury is converted to a toxic chemical called methylmercury, and this accumulates in increasing levels up the aquatic food chain. It is one of the reasons that doctors often will advise pregnant women not to eat certain fish because of the high mercury content. Why is there a high mercury content in some of those fish? This is the reason: mercury spewing out into our air, coming down and settling on land and water, getting into our waterways, and working its way up the aquatic chain, ultimately getting into our food.

Humans, especially young children and pregnant women, are vulnerable to mercury exposure from consuming contaminated fish or shellfish. This is a tragedy. Over 400,000 newborns are affected by mercury pollution each year in the United States—400,000 of our children, the greatest hope for our country, 400,000 children affected by mercury pollution each year in the United States.

What does mercury exposure do? It damages the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and it damages the immune system of people of all ages but, again, particularly vulnerable populations. It is a horrific toxin. This is not an argument. It is scientifically clear that the largest source of mercury air emissions are our power companies. It doesn't mean we want to shut the powerplants down; it doesn't mean we want to stop them. We want to take measures to remove the mercury emissions.

So what happened in the State of Oklahoma to hundreds of thousands of our children? What happened in the State of Oklahoma? The man who was on the job—he told the U.S. Senate that his job was protecting the welfare of the people. What Mr. Pruitt did is attack the EPA. He said that they lacked the legal authority to regulate powerplant mercury emissions and other hazardous pollutants under the mercury and air toxics standards. He did not do this once; he did it twice. When the EPA moved under the mandate they had, he tried to stop them twice.

He went even further than that because he apparently doesn't even believe that mercury is toxic to humans. In his challenge to the EPA's mercury rule, this is what he wrote: ''The record does not support the EPA's findings that mercury . . . pose[s] public health hazards.''

Reading this was astonishing to me. This was written by someone whom we want to put in charge of the Environmental Protection Agency? I am sure that even his family was told not to eat certain fish because of mercury. It is astonishing to me that he would say that ''the record does not support the EPA's findings that mercury . . . pose[s] public health hazards.''

Mercury is a scientifically proven, well documented, deadly neurotoxin, and the person we are about to elevate to head the Environmental Protection Agency when he had the chance to fight to protect people from mercury not only fought to stop efforts to restrain mercury being put into the air and into our water, he went as far as to say: Hey, this stuff isn't so bad.

While he was focused on attacking these mercury standards and denying its status as a toxic metal, the number of lakes in Oklahoma with mercury-related fish consumption advisories has doubled since 2010. Think about this. The attorney general, in charge of protecting people, has the Federal EPA saying: Hey, you have a problem here. Let's address it. The mercury levels in your lakes have doubled since 2010. The scientists and experts in your State are

releasing advisories to your community that state: Don't eat the fish from Oklahoma's lakes. His response is to fight against efforts to clean that up in support of those industries, as we are finding out, that are pumping money into his super PAC.

If I lived in a community and I lived next to a river that had deadly toxins in it—I have spent my entire professional career as a city councilman, as a mayor, and now here to fight to clean the Passaic River. I swore an oath to defend people. I am fighting for them.

What did Pruitt do when he had a shot to be there for the people who were living by lakes that literally had a doubling of the advisories about fish consumption? What did he do? Did he stand for the people or the polluters? What did he do? It is clear what he did. He stood with the polluters.

But there is more. Scott Pruitt filed a lawsuit challenging EPA's 2015 national ambient air quality standards for ozone. The Clean Air Act required the EPA to set national ambient air quality standards for air pollutants considered harmful to the public health and the environment.

Under this authority in 2015, the EPA strengthened the standards for ground-level ozone from 75 to 70 parts per billion, based on substantial scientific evidence about ozone levels on health. This updated ozone standard improved public health protections, particularly for children, older adults, and people who suffer from lung diseases like asthma. The new standard will prevent hundreds of thousands of asthma attacks. This is not rhetoric; this is scientifically based. The reductions will save hundreds of thousands of asthma attacks.

As already stated, Oklahomans have some of the highest incidence of asthma in our country. But like the mercury contamination in the lakes, this excessive asthma rate did not stop Scott Pruitt from trying to block EPA from regulating harmful air pollutants under the national ambient air quality standards. So this is Scott Pruitt.

The list goes on and on and on, of his attacks on the environment, of his doing the bidding of the polluting corporations, of literally taking his letterhead and taking their letters and putting them on his letterhead and using that, not his own research, not his own interviews with scientists, not his work connecting to people with asthma—which, unfortunately, in his State with one of the highest asthma rates isn't hard to find—not talking to the people who were in his State releasing advisories not to eat the fish because of increased mercury content. What he did was the bidding of the polluting industries, and he sued the EPA again and again and again and again and again.

The EPA estimated in 2015 on their regional haze rule—this is the Agency he is about to take over—that implementing the rule would prevent 1,600 premature deaths, 2,200 nonfatal heart attacks, 960 hospital admissions, and over 1 million lost schooldays and workdays. That is the EPA's estimate on one rule, the regional haze rule.

Think about that. He is going to lead an Agency where the scientists in that Agency are going to be telling him: Hey, this rule that you fought against is going to save lives. What is his response going to be?

Can we as Americans trust that he is going to run an Agency where he relies on science or is he going to run an Agency where he relies on polluting industries to give him advice on what he should do? If he relies on them, there will be 1,600 more premature deaths, 2,200 nonfatal heart attacks, 960 more hospitalizations. We will suffer. People will suffer.

Scott Pruitt also filed a lawsuit challenging the EPA cross-state air pollution rule. This rule tightens limits on the amount of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollution that powerplants in 28 States in the eastern United States are allowed to emit. Once in the air, this pollution drifts across state borders, meaning that States that had no role in contributing to the pollution suffer the repercussions. It is this type of interstate pollution that EPA is especially well positioned to address.

Further solidifying his stance as a staunch opponent of climate action, he filed four lawsuits. He filed four lawsuits challenging the EPA Clean Power Plan. He also sued the EPA to challenge the Clean Air Act 111(b) standards for carbon dioxide emissions from new powerplants. And in all those lawsuits except one, Scott Pruitt joined with the polluting companies that were also suing the EPA.

So amidst all this in the confirmation hearing, I asked Scott Pruitt, given all those lawsuits he had filed with the polluters against the EPA to block the EPA from reducing air pollution—he had even filed one lawsuit on behalf—he literally was advocating for polluting industries to the point where he was even using their letter on his letterhead to make his point. So my question was, in all this fighting against the EPA, all of this, using their words, using their facts, not the scientists in your community, not the scientists telling you about the mercury in the lakes and the fish that you shouldn't eat and one of the highest asthma rates in the Nation, I asked him: Have you ever filed at least one lawsuit on behalf of those 111,000 children in your State with asthma? Have you filed one lawsuit on their behalf to try to reduce the air pollution and help those kids? Have you ever filed one lawsuit as attorney general of the State? And his answer was no.

Had he ever tried as Oklahoma attorney general to take any action—any action to help those children who struggle with asthma? What reason did Mr. Pruitt give for failing to even try? Mr. Pruitt stated that he lacked the statutory authority to file that type of legal action.

Let's think about that for a minute. Again, it doesn't take a law degree to understand the problems with that statement. You see, Scott Pruitt was more aggressive than any other attorney general in our country's history in suing the EPA, often using completely novel theories in court that lost—novel theories that lost. He was trying to find all kinds of ways on behalf of polluting industries to stop the EPA and thought of using creative legal approaches for doing it. Yet, when it came to the children in his State, 111,000 children suffering from asthma, one of the highest rates in our country, could he think of one novel thing to do on their behalf? Did he file one lawsuit to try to help those children? No, he claimed he lacked the legal authority.

What Scott Pruitt lacked was not legal authority. What I believe he lacked was any interest in trying to truly help those kids, to stand up for people against polluters. Those sick children were not powerful. They didn't have millions of dollars for a super PAC. They couldn't make campaign contributions. It seems, when it comes to their advocacy, that they were not important enough for him to even try.

When Mr. Pruitt was questioned by a reporter on his practice of letting polluting companies write letters challenging EPA regulations, which he then copied onto his official attorney general letterhead and he then sent, this is what Scott Pruitt said. This is his defense for letting polluting companies write letters that he put on his letterhead and then sent off to the EPA, advocating for them: ''That is actually called representative government in my view of the world.''

That is, simply, not an acceptable world view for the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. His view of representative government isn't any one of those 111,000 children. His idea of representative government isn't a family living next to a lake from where they are advised not to eat the fish anymore. His idea of representative government isn't pregnant mothers who are worried about eating fish that are caught in the State. His idea of representative government is giving voice to the polluters—to the powerful, money-laden interests—and not to those of the people.

If Scott Pruitt wants to be the EPA Administrator, we as Americans should insist that we have transparency into what he did in his work beforehand—what he did on air quality, which I just went through. But the truth of the matter is that it is the same story for water pollution in the State, and it is the same story for other health and safety issues that the EPA was doing.

I conclude by saying that it is unfortunate that, at a time when we are finally going to get transparency into Scott Pruitt and what he has been doing as attorney general, after his stonewalling week after week, month after month, saying he wasn't going to release these records—by the way, the

person in charge of enforcing Oklahoma's Freedom of Information Act is the attorney general. So it is kind of ironic that the attorney general was refusing to enforce them himself—the laws that public officials have to abide by in the State. It finally took a judge to order him to release that transparency. Now we are going to get these letters and see more about his connections to polluting companies—what kind of potential collusion went on and what conversations went on. Was he fundraising even from his official capacity? What was happening?

Alone, that is unfortunate that we are not, at least, postponing this vote until we get transparency in the Senate. Our role, as spelled out by the Constitution, is to advise and consent the President on these choices, and we are about to vote on somebody on whom we don't have full transparency to give advice.

The final point is that here is someone who is going to be the head of an agency that was started under the Nixon administration that is focused on protecting the health and safety of Americans, and he has demonstrated in no way his commitment to doing that—that he is putting people first. More than that, he has the ability to pull back these regulations that he himself has been fighting and that the scientists are saying will literally save lives.

It is not just what he will do. It is what he won't do in that job that is so threatening and so potentially devastating to families and communities like the one he is coming from. I cannot support someone who denies climate change, someone who clearly prioritizes polluting companies over people, someone who has spent his career in not protecting folks but in fighting the EPA.

I end where I began, with this Nation's ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I would hope that an EPA Administrator, regardless of party, would understand the sanctity of those ideals and those aspirations. This person is clearly, clearly not someone who will support the common good but narrow interests to the detriment of, not just of his State, not just of our United States, but to the detriment of our children's future and of the future of the very planet.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I just want to follow up on what Senator BOOKER has been talking about.

This is a historic nomination tonight. This reminds the country so much of James Watt being nominated in 1981 to be the Secretary of the Interior. That turned out disastrously. He had to resign. This reminds the Nation of the nomination of Anne Gorsuch, in 1981, as the head of the EPA. That ended disastrously. She had to resign.

We are just repeating history here today as we are going through the very same stages of an administration—a radical rightwing, anti-environmental administration—that is trying to dismantle environmental laws across our country. It did not end well back then, and this will not end well. Scott Pruitt, as attorney general of the State of Oklahoma, has not demonstrated the qualities that are going to be necessary in order to protect the environment of our country.

Today, many of us recognized a day without an immigrants. Businesses across the country closed, students did not attend classes, and workers did not head to their jobs—in protest. In my own home State of Massachusetts, the museum at Wellesley College took down all of the works of art that were created and donated by immigrants. Bare walls, empty desks, shuttered restaurants—all of these things—show us just how essential, how fundamental immigrants are to our economy and to the very fabric of our Nation.

Now imagine if tomorrow we recognized a day without the Environmental Protection Agency. Imagine that—with no Environmental Protection Agency; no Clean Air Act enforcement; no clean water rule enforcement; no one to clean up abandoned Superfund and toxic waste sites; more climate change; more kids with asthma; more rivers with toxins running through them; more families with cancer; more environmental injustice for communities of color because it is those communities, the most vulnerable communities, that will suffer the worst consequences on a day without the EPA.

If Scott Pruitt has his way, it won't just be a day without the EPA. It could be a nation without the EPA. That is what Scott Pruitt wants. That is what congressional Republicans want. That is what Donald Trump wants—no more clean air and water protections, no more pollution controls, no more environmental justice. That is Scott Pruitt's favorite day. That is Scott Pruitt's EPA.

That is why we are out here tonight. We are out here tonight to begin this warning to the country that there is trouble brewing if Scott Pruitt is, in fact, confirmed as the next head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

What is it that we can look forward to?

The oil, the gas, the coal industries opposed many of the Obama administration's commonsense protections for our air, for our water, for our climate.

One by one, Republicans in Congress are working to legislatively overturn many of those protections. They now have twice deployed a very rarely used procedural tool known as the Congressional Review Act to benefit the coal, the oil, the gas industries by rolling back environmental protections. Republicans are planning to use the Congressional Review Act to hand out even more giveaways to the fossil fuel industries in the coming weeks.

You can pick any industry you want—coal, oil, mining, timber, grazing. You go through, and no matter how you spin it on the Republican ''Wheel of Giveaways,'' some industry gets a big giveaway. They are trying to decide right now what is the next one they will bring out here that waters down the protections that the American people need in each and every one of these areas. But don't question for a second if that is what this whole year is going to be about. Just take oil. There will be big tax breaks for oil coming very, very soon—like they need it. The same thing is going to be true in area after area. We have our helpful tool here, the GOP ''Wheel of Giveaways,'' to help viewers at home keep track of which industries the Republicans are making the weekly winners.

Now, by nominating Scott Pruitt to head the EPA, President Trump and Senate Republicans have found their new host for this great Republican show—the ''Wheel of Giveaways''—and that will be Scott Pruitt, attorney general of Oklahoma, because Scott Pruitt has already made a career of handing out prizes to the fossil fuel industry in our country.

As attorney general of Oklahoma, he sued to block the EPA from restricting toxic mercury pollution from powerplants in order to benefit the coal industry—that is right—blocking protections from mercury that could affect the lungs of children in his own State and, ultimately, across the whole country.

Then, as attorney general of Oklahoma, he questioned the EPA's estimate of air pollution from new natural gas wells in Oklahoma. By doing that, he took natural gas and oil, and he made sure that would, as well, be something that wasn't subject to the types of regulations that were necessary in order to protect the public health and safety.

Then he moved on, as attorney general of Oklahoma, to push for a rollback of protections of our Nation's waterways to the benefit of corporate polluters. Corporate polluters love to use the waterways of our country as one big sewer. Why do you have to store that dirty water? Why do you have to make sure that it is just not put in some safe place when you can just use rivers? Just dump all of that garbage right in the river. Put all of that pollution right in the river. Who cares what impact it has upon families? Who cares what impact it has upon children?

So, again, this ''Wheel of Giveaways'' is really a way to ensure that the polluting industries don't have to pay to clean up the messes they create, just pass it on to innocent families, because with Scott Pruitt as the new host of the Republican ''Wheel of Giveaways,'' we know who will always win every time, every week, during all 4 years of the Trump administration. It will always be the oil industry, the natural gas industry, the coal industry, the polluters of all stripes that otherwise the EPA would be regulating and protecting the public health and safety of our country.

It is going to ultimately be those American families who are left to lose protections which for generations we have fought to put on the books in order to ensure that we increase life expectancy and reduce exposure to asthma and other diseases that otherwise, because of these polluting companies, are going to be visited upon hundreds of thousands and millions of families within our country.

When we think about this whole issue of the environment, many times we say: Well, the Republicans—the coal industry, they say there is a War on Coal in the United States of America, an absolute war, a war out there to destroy the industry. However, upon closer examination, it turns out that it is the free market that has been working to replace coal with other sources of energy.

A decade ago—here are the numbers—50 percent of all electricity in the United States came from coal; now it is down to 30 percent of all electricity in our country. What has replaced coal? Well, the free market has actually substituted natural gas, which has grown from a little over 20 percent of U.S. electrical generation a decade ago to 35 percent of all electricity in our country right now. And coal has been replaced by clean energy—by wind, which has grown to 5 to 6 percent of our generation from almost nothing, and solar, which is up to 1 percent of all of our electrical generation. And between wind and solar, there are additions of 1.5 percent every single year between those two sources, to renewable electrical generation capacity in our country. So we can see that every year that goes by—over a 15-year period, for example, that would be 22 percent of all electricity would be wind and solar if we just keep on the current pace.

From the coal industry's perspective, that is terrible. That is a War on Coal, what natural gas is doing, what wind and solar are doing. But the reality is that they are losing it in the marketplace. ADAM SMITH is spinning in his grave—so quickly, by the way, that he would actually probably qualify as a new source of energy. So the Republican complaint is that the free market is killing coal; it is a war. It is capitalism, actually, and it is working. So the only way they can stop it, the only way they can slow it down, is to get somebody like Scott Pruitt to be the new head of the Environmental Protection Agency. This isn't a conspiracy; it is actually a competition, and the competition for those clean energy jobs is global.

Back in the 1990s, I was the author of a law that moved over 200 megahertz of spectrum. In 1993 in America, the average phone that was wireless was the size of a brick. It looked like the phone Gordon Gekko had in the movie ''Wall Street.'' People didn't have one. It cost 50 cents a minute. But I was able to move over 200 megahertz of spectrum in 1993, and four new companies were able to compete. They both went digital, and by 1996, this is what people had in their pocket—under 10 cents a minute, and all of a sudden everyone had this phone. It just killed that phone that was the size of a brick.

But then another remarkable thing happened. Within 8 or 10 more years, there was a guy out in Silicon Valley, and he came up with an idea for an iPhone, and that revolution just kept moving because we had opened it up to competition.

You can imagine there were devotees to the black rotary dial phone who kept saying: Oh my goodness, it is a war on the black rotary dial phone, all of these new devices. But it wasn't. It was just technology. It was a revolution. It was capitalism, and it had finally been opened to that competition after 100 years.

Well, that is what has happened in electrical generation. We finally have passed laws that open it up to competition. It is not a secret. And the only way to shut it down is to have someone like Scott Pruitt as the head of the EPA because then, all of a sudden, you can have an EPA chief who says: We are not going to have any new rules on climate change. We are not going to have any more rules that reduce the amount of pollution that goes up into the atmosphere. We are not going to have any more rules that ensure that President Obama's Clean Power Plan is implemented in our country, which would again telescope the timeframe that it would take in order to deploy these massive amounts of new renewable electricity sources in our country and expedite the pace at which natural gas resources get deployed in our country.

So that is really what this is all about. It is a special interest giveaway—pick your industry. How do we protect it? How do we make sure we don't move beyond the 20th century? How do we not have this incredible green generation be able to invent the new energy technologies of this century, the same way that they invented the new telecommunications technologies at the end of the 20th century? How do we stop them? Well, you have to really find people who are willfully committed to it.

Let's go to Scott Pruitt. Scott Pruitt, as the attorney general of Oklahoma, unbelievably sued the EPA 19 times. Now, what attorney general sues the EPA 19 times? Well, let's look at the subjects he sued on—clean air, clean water, soot, mercury, haze. It is almost like a laundry list of the dirtiest issues that America would want us to have an Environmental Protection Agency working on. And he sued over and over and over again. And even as he is being considered for confirmation, after I questioned him in the hearing, saying: Will you recuse yourself from any consideration of any issue that you have already sued the agency on that is still pending, he said he would not recuse himself.

So I said to Mr. Pruitt in that hearing: Well, if you don't recuse yourself and you still have eight pending cases, that will make you the plaintiff, the defendant, the judge, and the jury on these matters that are at the heart of the clean air, clean water agenda that the American people want to see implemented in the 21st century.

What was he doing in Oklahoma? What was he trying to accomplish? Well, I decided to ask Mr. Pruitt some questions.

Question No. 1: I asked Mr. Pruitt to describe the actions he took as Oklahoma's attorney general to enforce the State's environmental laws. His response: He told me to go file an open records request.

Secondly, I asked Mr. Pruitt how much of the budget he controlled as attorney general did he devote to Oklahoma's Office of Environmental Enforcement. Do you know what he told me? He said: Go file an open records request.

No. 3: I asked Mr. Pruitt how many individuals he employed in the Office of Environmental Enforcement. Do you know what his answer was? You are asking for too much information. Go file an open records request.

No. 4: I learned that Mr. Pruitt had hired one of his campaign contributors to sue the EPA, so I asked him to show me the contract. And do you know what he told me? You are right. You guessed it. He told me to go file an open records request.

So his answer to me over and over again was go FOIA yourself. But that is not a sufficient answer to a Member of Congress because we actually get the right to ask for critical information on the environmental records of those who are applying for the job of chief environmental protector of our country. And if you are looking for evidence to convict Scott Pruitt on the charge of protecting public health and the environment, he is unwilling to give it to you.

During his confirmation hearing, we heard a lot about Scott Pruitt respecting States' rights. Scott Pruitt's record shows that he is in favor of States' rights but only when it is good for the State of Oklahoma and the oil industry of Oklahoma. When I asked him about protecting the rights of States like California and Massachusetts to do more to protect their environment, he declined to support their rights to do that for their States.

So under Scott Pruitt, EPA is going to turn into Every Polluter's Ally. He won't be there as the cop on the beat to ensure that those protections are in place to ensure that every American—all 320 million—is given the protections they need. No. It will no longer be an Agency that is a watchdog for the environment; this is an Agency that is going to be a lap dog for polluters across our country. And if that is the case, then we are going to see a rollback in the health, the safety of those protections that all Americans have come to expect in the area of the environment.

When we raised the issues of his conflict of interest in the committee, we received unsatisfactory answers. When we raised the issues of providing us the information we were going to need in order to fully understand his complete record, we were not given the answers we need.

Now let me once again come back to 1981 and 1982. What did James Watt do at the Department of Interior? Well, he wound up selling off for bargain-basement prices the coal resources in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming. It was a scandal of massive proportion. It led to his resignation. It was avoidable but predictable because he made very clear what his attitude was about all of these resources.

The same thing was true over at the EPA with Anne Gorsuch. It was an Agency that the Reagan administration, in actual reports, said that the goal of the EPA Administrator would be to bring the Agency to its knees—to its knees—and that became the goal during the Gorsuch time at the EPA. So another resignation.

We have here with Scott Pruitt someone who has the same agenda, the same goals, and the same unfortunate allies to accomplish those goals.

So I am going to continue, along with my colleagues, for the rest of the evening to bring this case to the American people. We believe this is a preview of coming attractions. We want America to know who Scott Pruitt is because when he begins to take action in March, in April, and in May, if he is confirmed, then they will know who he is very simply because everything we are saying tonight is going to be a preview of those coming attractions.

So at this point, I reserve the remainder of my time.

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. 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.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, earlier today I spoke on the floor about Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt and his nomination to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. Since that time, an Oklahoma judge has now ruled that Scott Pruitt must comply with a 2-year-old request to release email correspondence between the attorney general's office and fossil fuel companies, like oil company Devon Energy and coal company Murray Energy.

After an over 2-year struggle, these communications will finally come to light starting next Tuesday, but the Senate is due to vote on Scott Pruitt's nomination tomorrow afternoon, Friday, at 1 p.m. Now, that smells to the high heavens. The American people in the Senate have a right to know what is in all of those emails that have finally been ordered to be released by a court. Instead, what the Republican leadership is going to do is rush to judgment, forcing Members of the Senate to vote on this confirmation without knowing what is in all of these emails that have been subject to litigation for the last 2 years.

Now, it is a little bit fishy because Republicans have been obsessed with emails for over 2 years. They have spent millions of dollars on attempts to gain access to emails during the Presidential campaign, but now they are denying the Senate and the American public the right to examine Scott Pruitt's emails. That, again, is not OK. The only thing Senate Republicans seem to want to deny more than climate change is the right of Senators to review these 3,000 emails. That, again, is not OK. So we are going to be in a very funny situation at 1 tomorrow afternoon. The emails are on the way. We are going to find out what was in all of those emails. We are going to find out what kind of correspondence Attorney General Pruitt had with all of these different entities with which he was communicating, but the Senators will not have it for a basis of casting a vote.

Now, maybe it is benign, but maybe it is not. Maybe that is why this vote is being rushed. It is being rushed so the Senators don't know what is in there; that they are blind as they vote. Then, as each email becomes public, as each new revelation becomes public in the weeks and months ahead, people are going to look back at this body and they are going to say: Why could you not wait just another week so Senators could know what was in those emails? I think there is a reason why many people have arched eyebrows that are going up so high that it would hit the roof a ceiling. There is a reason to be skeptical that something is happening here that is meant to be a rush to judgment to avoid all of the evidence being placed in front of the Senators and the American people in terms of his nomination.

Members of the faith community are weighing in as well. They have opposed Mr. Pruitt's nomination. I want to read portions of a letter that the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Massachusetts sent to President Trump:

> The Episcopal Church stands strongly for the protection of the environment. We respect the facts of science. We support the laws and policies that address the reality of climate change.
>
> Our respect for our government leaders and our reverence for the earth as God's creation impel us to write you to express our dismay about your selection of Scott Pruitt to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

These are the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Massachusetts. They continue:

> We wonder why a person who has consistently and adamantly opposed all laws and policies that provide even minimal ''protection'' to the environment should be entrusted with leading such an agency.
>
> President-elect Trump, you have promised economic development. Like you, we value a stable and prosperous economy. However, a thriving economy depends on a healthy environment. The more we weaken and dismantle the E.P.A.'s vital protections of our natural world, the more we threaten the common good.
>
> You have also promised to strengthen our national defense. Like you, we value national security. However, our country's top military intelligence have concluded that climate change is a ''threat multiplier'' that is already creating instability around the world and will likely create significant security challenges in the years ahead. If someone who casts doubt on the reality of climate change becomes the head of the E.P.A., our national security will be compromised.
>
> As citizens of this beloved country, we intend to write our members of Congress, urging them to block the nomination of Scott Pruitt to lead the E.P.A. We will pray for a better choice.

The letter is signed by the following faith leaders: Right Reverend Douglas J. Fisher, Bishop Diocesan of Western Massachusetts; the Right Reverend Alan M. Gates, Bishop Diocesan of Massachusetts; the Right Reverend Gayle Harris, Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts; the Right Reverend Barbara C. Harris, Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts; the Right Reverend Roy F. Cederholm, Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts.

The reality is, this is not just a question of these Episcopal bishops, but Pope Francis came to the Congress just last year and preached a sermon on the Hill, saying the planet is dangerously warming, human activity is causing it, and we have a moral responsibility to take action as Americans, as the House and Senate, a moral responsibility to protect this planet that God created and those who are the poorest and most vulnerable who will be most exposed.

This is a moral issue of the highest magnitude. The leaders of religions all across our country are praying for us, begging us to do something in order to protect this planet. Scott Pruitt does not intend on taking those actions.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I want to continue on the subject that I was just referencing. This is a story from Oklahoma that is on the wires right now across the country.

Headline: ''Judge orders Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to release emails related to fossil fuel industry.''

Let me read a little bit of this news story. This is Oklahoma City.

> A judge has ruled that Americans have a right to know how much of a relationship Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt has with oil and gas leaders before becoming the head of the Environmental Protection Agency.
>
> For years, Pruitt has been an outspoken adversary of the EPA and is currently suing the agency.

In December, President Donald Trump selected Pruitt to lead the agency despite concerns from lawmakers.

A 2014 New York Times report claimed that Pruitt's ties to Devon Energy Corporation directly influenced decisions he made while in office in Oklahoma.

Through open records requests, the New York Times obtained a letter written by Devon's attorneys, which was then taken to Pruitt.

The article states, ''The attorney general's staff had taken Devon's draft, copied it onto state government stationery with only a few word changes, and sent it to Washington with the attorney general's signature.''

In 2014, KFOR asked for a comment to the allegations, but received a statement focusing on the benefits of the oil industry. . . . Six Senators from the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee asked Pruitt to list his connections to energy companies so they can decide whether those interactions will affect how he will run the EPA. . . . The Center for Media and Democracy filed nine open records requests with the AG's office, beginning in January 2015.

''Probably the largest request we have is for communication: emails, phone calls, [and] scheduling related to his involvement with various energy companies, as well as his involvement with the republican attorney general's association,'' attorney Blake Lawrence said.

The group alleges that Pruitt received nearly $350,000 in campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry. They want his dealings with those in the industry made public—and soon.

''Just last week our office contacted the Center for Media and Democracy to notify them that release of their request was imminent. The fact that they have now filed suit despite our ongoing communications demonstrates that this is nothing more than political theater,'' AG spokesman Lincoln Ferguson said in a statement.

According to the Hill, Democrats asked Pruitt for the documents as part of his confirmation hearing, but he declined. Instead, he told them to file public records requests themselves.

Now, a judge has ordered the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office to turn over close to 3,000 documents related to Pruitt's communications with oil, gas, and coal companies, according to E&E News.

Pruitt's office has until Tuesday to release the emails, but his confirmation vote was originally believed to be held Friday, Feb. 17.

Meaning today, in 5 more minutes.

''Scott Pruitt and Senate Republicans have made a mockery of the confirmation process, permitting the nominee to escape scrutiny and hide his deep ties to the fossil fuel industry. What is he hiding in all of these emails? The vote to confirm Pruitt must now be delayed until every senator can see just who Pruitt is and what he will do if permitted to run the EPA,'' a statement from the Sierra Club read.

That is where we are right now, ladies and gentlemen. We are 6 minutes to midnight on Thursday night. The vote is now scheduled in 13 hours 5 minutes here on the Senate floor.

These emails are going to be released next Tuesday so there can be a public examination of them, to finally determine what is the relationship between Scott Pruitt and these industries that he will be given responsibility to regulate.

What are they hiding? Why are they rushing? Why will they not give the American people the ability to find out what is inside these emails before there is a vote on the Senate floor? Because once that vote takes place, he will be the head of EPA, and then we will find out what conflicts may exist, what relationships may exist, what decisions had been made. But, no, the Senate leadership will not give the American people the respect they deserve to ensure that all of that information is out for public viewing so they can make an informed judgment as to the exact nature of the relationships between this nominee for the EPA and industries that he has had responsibility for regulating in Oklahoma and he will have responsibility for regulating as the head of the national Environmental Protection Agency.

It is an absolutely unacceptable policy to know that critical information that makes it possible for the public and the Senate to understand a candidate for such a powerful office is to be available and yet not in fact considered as part of this historic decision.

For me, it is a ''March of Folly.'' It is just another example of how the Republican Party, the GOP, has become the gas and oil party. That is really what it stands for now, just committed to ensuring that they cover up what is in these emails. They don't give the public the chance to be able to understand what these potentially explosive relationships may be so the Senate can deliberate fully on whether Mr. Pruitt does in fact qualify to be an impartial head of the Environmental Protection Agency of our country and ultimately of the world because the world looks to us to determine where climate change is going, where environmental protections are going, not just for our own citizens but for theirs as well. What we do is replicated inevitably, inextricably in the rest of the world.

This man will have one of the most powerful positions on the planet. Emails are available right now if we just wait to help us in our deliberation. It is really a tragedy. It is a sad commentary upon this institution that rather than just delaying, examining, and then giving the public the information they need in the Senate, instead we rush to judgment. We rush to judgment, but ultimately the judgment of history is going to be on us if it is determined, through these emails, that Mr. Pruitt is unqualified for this position; that the conflicts which he has had disqualify him for this position; that the emails disclosed to us the conflicts of interest that are going to ultimately impair his ability to be impartial in his regulation of clean air and clean water and mercury and haze and soot and smog and this whole litany of issues that go right to the public health and safety of every American.

From my perspective, it is a sad day in the Senate when the information is now available, a brief delay would make it possible for each Senator to be able to make an informed decision, and yet the Senate moves on, not waiting, not listening, not willing to give the American public the information they will need to make an informed decision that they can then give to their Senators to make a wise decision that could lead to much stronger protections that they can receive from this critical Agency that is the overseer of the environment in our country.

Again, I oppose Mr. Pruitt's nomination. I would ask for a delay. I know it is not going to happen. I understand why, but it is a sad day in the history of the Senate.

Mr. President, I wish to reclaim the remainder of my time and yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, the Committee on Rules and Administration has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 115th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator KLOBUCHAR, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION UNITED STATES SENATE

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 1. The regular meeting date of the Committee shall be the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, at 10:00 a.m. in room SR–301, Russell Senate Office Building. Additional meetings of the Committee may be called by the Chairman as he may deem necessary or pursuant to the provision of paragraph 3 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Rule 2. Meetings of the committee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the committee on the same subject for a period of no more than 14 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 subparagraphs (a) through (f) would require the meeting to be closed followed immediately by a recorded vote in open session by a majority of the Members of the committee when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings:

(a) 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;

(b) will relate solely to matters of the committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(c) 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;

(d) 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;

(e) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if:

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) 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

(f) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under the provisions of law or Government regulations. (Paragraph 5(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

Rule 3. Written notices of committee meetings will normally be sent by the committee's staff director to all Members of the committee at least a week in advance. In addition, the committee staff will telephone or e-mail reminders of committee meetings to all Members of the committee or to the appropriate assistants in their offices.

Rule 4. A copy of the committee's intended agenda enumerating separate items of legislative business and committee business will normally be sent to all Members of the committee and released to the public at least 1 day in advance of all meetings. This does not preclude any Member of the committee from discussing appropriate non-agenda topics.

Rule 5. After the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member, speaking order shall be based on order of arrival, alternating between Majority and Minority Members, unless otherwise directed by the Chairman.

Rule 6. Any witness who is to appear before the committee in any hearing shall file with the clerk of the committee at least 3 business days before the date of his or her appearance, a written statement of his or her proposed testimony and an executive summary thereof, in such form as the chairman may direct, unless the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member waive such requirement for good cause.

Rule 7. In general, testimony will be restricted to 5 minutes for each witness. The time may be extended by the Chairman, upon the Chair's own direction or at the request of a Member. Each round of questions by Members will also be limited to 5 minutes.

QUORUMS

Rule 8. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, a majority of the Members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the reporting of legislative measures.

Rule 9. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, one-third of the Members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, including action on amendments to measures prior to voting to report the measure to the Senate.

Rule 10. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(2) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, 2 Members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony under oath and 1 Member of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony not under oath; provided, however, that in either instance, once a quorum is established, any one Member can continue to take such testimony.

Rule 11. Under no circumstances may proxies be considered for the establishment of a quorum.

VOTING

Rule 12. Voting in the committee on any issue will normally be by voice vote.

Rule 13. If a third of the Members present so demand a roll call vote instead of a voice vote, a record la vote will be taken on any question by roll call.

Rule 14. The results of roll call votes taken in any meeting upon any measure, or any amendment thereto, shall be stated in the committee report on that measure unless previously announced by the committee, and such report or announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor of and the votes cast in opposition to each such measure and amendment by each Member of the committee. (Paragraph 7(b) and (c) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

Rule 15. Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the committee. However, the vote of the committee to report a measure or matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of the Members of the committee who are physically present at the time of the vote. Proxies will be allowed in such cases solely for the purpose of recording a Member's position on the question and then only in those instances when the absentee committee Member has been informed of the question and has affirmatively requested that he be recorded. (Paragraph 7(a)(3) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

AMENDMENTS

Rule 16. Provided at least five business days' notice of the agenda is given, and the text of the proposed bill or resolution has been made available at least five business days in advance, it shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee unless such amendment has been delivered to the office of the Committee and circulated via e-mail to each of the offices by at least 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled start of the meeting.

Rule 17. In the event the Chairman introduces a substitute amendment or a Chairman's mark, the requirements set forth in Rule 16 shall be considered waived unless such substitute amendment or Chairman's mark has been made available at least five business days in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Rule 18. It shall be in order, without prior notice, for a Member to offer a motion to strike a single section of any bill, resolution, or amendment under consideration.

Rule 19. This section of the rule may be waived by agreement of the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Rule 20. The Chairman is authorized to sign himself or by delegation all necessary vouchers and routine papers for which the committee's approval is required and to decide in the committee's behalf all routine business.

Rule 21. The Chairman is authorized to engage commercial reporters for the preparation of transcripts of committee meetings and hearings.

Rule 22. The Chairman is authorized to issue, on behalf of the committee, regulations normally promulgated by the committee at the beginning of each session.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

Rule 23. The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, acting jointly, are authorized to approve on behalf of the committee any rule or regulation for which the committee's approval is required, provided advance notice of their intention to do so is given to Members of the committee.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate Black History Month, a time to honor and reflect on the many achievements and sacrifices of African Americans throughout our Nation's history.

This February, we highlight the titans of African-American history. We honor the culture-shifting accomplishments of civil rights icons such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Dorothy Height, and our esteemed colleague, Congressman JOHN LEWIS.

As the senior Senator from Maryland, I would be remiss if I didn't also honor Harriet Tubman, Thurgood Marshall, and—perhaps one of the greatest Marylanders in our long history—Frederick Douglass. There are some out there who may not know it, but Douglass was born in Maryland around 1818. He learned to read and write in Baltimore before escaping slavery. Despite unknowable hardship and systemic discrimination, he went on to become one of the most influential writers, orators, publishers, and abolitionists of his time. Though Douglass fiercely and vocally opposed slavery, he would want us to remember that he stood for the rights of all Americans, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin. These views—revolutionary for the time—gained him increasing prominence, leading to 1872, when Victoria Woodhull chose him as her Vice Presidential nominee.

Frederick Douglass was the first Black American ever to hold that title. His legacy continues to make Maryland proud.

While we take time to recognize Frederick Douglass and others this month, we must also celebrate the countless men and women whose names and heroism will never grace the history books. Let us never forget all of those who suffered discrimination in silence, who endured civil rights abuses without recognition, who sat-in and stood up to oppression without accolade. We should use this month to lift up their memories and to recommit to the causes of justice and equality for which they also fought so diligently.

In particular, we should honor the Black teachers who taught generations of children in the dark, against the odds and sometimes the law, with little more than old, secondhand books and makeshift buildings. We honor the businessowners who laid the foundations of the Black community in places like Baltimore, Harlem, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Tulsa. We honor the civil rights movement foot soldiers who rejected subservience and embraced rebellion by marching in the streets of Selma and Birmingham. We honor the factory workers who left the South behind with hopes of a brighter

future, only to struggle in Northern cities for pennies.

For too long, Black Americans' rich and vibrant history has been ignored or obscured by the specter of prejudice. But today, and for the rest of the month, in classrooms and cities across our Nation, we will shine a spotlight on that history.

We will vow to honor it here, now, in the present and in the future, through protecting both the legacy of civil rights and the Americans who are counting on us to uphold them. As lawmakers and as leaders, it is our duty to fight on their behalf. It is our duty to pass laws that will protect all Americans, support all Americans, and defend all Americans, especially those who have been victims of institutional and systemic prejudice.

That is why I introduced the End Racial Profiling Act in 2011. It is incumbent upon every Member in this Chamber to be an advocate for the men and women of color who are singled out every day simply because of their skin color and appearance. These individuals are your constituents. They are my constituents. They are our fellow Americans.

They deserve our commitment and an attention span that lasts longer than 1 month a year.

Discriminatory profiling based on race—or religion or gender identity, nation of origin, sexual orientation—has no place in our society. It is un-American; it is also counterproductive. Racial profiling doesn't keep us safer. To the contrary: it breeds hostility and distrust, and it turns communities against law enforcement and against each other. It wastes resources that our law enforcement agencies can't afford to spend. And the more time we waste targeting Americans because of their race or religion, the less time we are devoting to those who are actually committing crimes or trying to harm us.

My End Racial Profiling Act, which I plan to reintroduce this week, would eliminate this harmful practice and instead offer resources for more police training, mandate greater accountability, and offer recourse for Americans who have been unduly profiled.

Our duty to African Americans does not end there. That is why, as ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I intend to introduce the National Security Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Act, which would codify and build upon President Obama's efforts to diversify our national security workforce. Having a workforce that looks like America is not just good personnel policy, it is also a national security imperative.

Our diversity is one of the strongest assets that the United States has. It allows us to connect and work with different communities and countries across the globe; it helps us to foster the relationships we need to fight terrorism across the globe. And having a diverse set of backgrounds, skills, knowledge, perspectives, and experiences contributes to better national security decisionmaking. We should lead the world and protect our homeland not just by preaching pluralism and tolerance, but by practicing it.

While we embark on that mission, we should take with us the words of Frederick Douglass: ''If there is no struggle, there is no progress.'' Everyone in this body has a responsibility to be part of the struggle and, through it, to be part of progress. Everyone in this body has a responsibility to embrace struggle, even when it occurs right here on this floor, if it is in the name of progress.

I am talking about protecting the Voting Rights Act. The right to vote is fundamental to every democracy. Every vote counts and must be counted fairly.

I am talking about ending the senseless and discriminatory practice of racial profiling. It is painful that, in 2017, we still need to explain that Americans should not be considered suspects or targets because of the color of their skin.

I am talking about criminal justice reform—and prioritizing criminal justice reform in this Congress.

I am talking about recognizing the incredible contributions of Frederick Douglass, Dorothy Height, Harriet Tubman, Katherine Johnson, Mae Jemison, and others in our public school curricula.

Many Americans would not even recognize their names, and that is a tragic failure on our part to honor Black history.

I am talking about not just talking, but committing to these causes through actions around our States and through legislation right here in this Chamber. Whether through passing my End Racial Profiling Act or my National Security Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Act or any other bills introduced by my colleagues, Black History Month reminds us that we can and must do more. Let us begin by remembering that Black history is American history. Their story is our story. When we celebrate Black pioneers and activists and inventors and artists, we celebrate the diversity and the strength of character that are the reasons we are here today.

SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to shine a spotlight on the dire security and humanitarian situation in northeastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin, precipitated by Boko Haram, and to urge the new administration to organize quickly to address it. Nigeria has been referred to as one of the anchor states of sub-Saharan Africa and our bilateral relationship is one of our most important on the continent. It is the most populous country on the continent. It has the biggest economy. It has contributed troops to regional and U.N. peacekeeping missions for decades and is a major oil-producing country. Nigeria's population is forecast to grow to 400 million by 2050, overtaking the United States and becoming the world's third most populous country. Nigeria's political and economic influence in the region is difficult to overstate, and it will only increase as the population and economy grow.

That is why I joined Senator CORKER in writing to President Obama urging high-level engagement with Nigeria in the wake of the 2015 elections, elections which, while perhaps not perfect, turned out to be a positive story of respect for democracy in the region. For the first time in the nation's history, there was a peaceful transition of power between opposing political parties. Though people feared the worst, Nigerians proved they can be leaders on the continent and in the world. However, for Nigeria to fully realize its enormous promise, it must deal with a range of challenges from rampant corruption, to insecurity and intercommunal violence in the Niger Delta and the Middle Belt, tensions in the southeast, and most immediately the continuing threat Boko Haram poses in northeastern Nigeria and other countries in the Lake Chad basin. It is critical that we help with these efforts.

Since 2010, Boko Haram has devastated northeastern Nigeria. According to the 2016 Global Terrorism Index, Boko Haram has the chilling distinction of being among the deadliest terrorist groups in history, with the second highest death toll from attacks out of all terrorist groups since 2000. In recent years, its attacks have spread to Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The group, which pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015 and now calls itself the Islamic State West Africa Province, has killed almost 16,000 people. Thousands of others have died as a result of clashes between the military and Boko Haram. The terrorist group has kidnapped thousands, including nearly 300 girls from Chibok in April 2014. The whereabouts of almost 200 of the girls remains unknown.

Countries in the Lake Chad basin are experiencing what U.N. officials and aid workers have called a forgotten crisis as a result of the terrorist group's activities. Nearly 2 million people have been displaced in Nigeria alone. Two hundred thousand Nigerians have fled across borders as refugees. Eight-and-a-half million people in northeast Nigeria are in need of humanitarian assistance. Nearly 2 million people are estimated to be at risk for starvation. Continued insecurity has prevented aid workers from reaching some areas, so the actual needs may be even greater. Last November, Doctors Without Borders expressed fears that malnutrition could wipe out the under-5 population in parts of Nigeria's Borno state.

In his 2015 inaugural address, President Muhammadu Buhari cited Boko

Haram as the most pressing issue facing his administration, and to his credit, he has taken some action. The command center for counter Boko Haram operations has been relocated to Maiduguri, and Nigerians are coordinating military action with other countries in the Lake Chad basin. However, despite the Nigerian Government's claims, Boko Haram has not been largely defeated, and attacks continue. Just last month, the Nigerian military warned of a horrifying new tactic: women suicide bombers carrying babies in order to evade detection.

The reports of continued attacks are profoundly disturbing. As tempting as it is to focus on a military solution, we must be very wary of falling into the trap of thinking that the scourge of Boko Haram can be overcome through military means alone. It is critical that we continue to encourage and support the Nigerian Government's use of all of all available tools to counter violent extremism in the northeast. The Obama administration engaged former President Goodluck Jonathan on the need to develop a holistic civilian-security focused counterterrorism strategy, one that addresses legitimate political and economic grievances in affected communities, but that approach was never fully embraced.

There has been movement towards a countering violent extremism approach under President Buhari's leadership, and we should continue to encourage Nigerians to do more. One of the most important ways to engender the trust of the population is to provide access to justice for human rights abuses by security forces. After nearly 2 years in office, Buhari has yet to keep commitments to do so. The government created a human rights desk for the national army last year, which I welcome, but the establishment of the desk in and of itself is not enough. The military has made very serious mistakes for which it must be held accountable.

In mid-2015, Amnesty International released a report alleging that the deaths of 8,000 civilians are attributable to the Nigerian military in northeast Nigeria. The report calls for the investigation of specific military commanders who are alleged to have had knowledge of torture, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary detentions in overcrowded facilities that lead to thousands of deaths. Buhari said he would launch an investigation. However, we have yet to see any one prosecuted, tried, or convicted. The results of a commission of judicial inquiry into the massacre of more than 300 people in the northern city of Zaria in December 2015 were made public last year. The inquiry found that the deaths were a result of excessive force on the part of the Nigerian army. To date, there has been no action on the part of the federal government to hold abusive security forces accountable. Impunity for human rights abuses serves to undermine all of the work we are doing to counter violent extremism.

In addition to widespread allegations of extrajudicial killings, there are accusations that the military has stolen humanitarian supplies and sexually exploited and abused those living in camps for internally displaced. And many of those freed from Boko Haram have been kept in internment camps for indefinite amounts of time, subject to a screening process that appears inconsistent and is not transparent. Internally displaced persons have reported that the military and local militia take men and boys seeking refuge in camps for screening and they are never seen again. All of these actions have a deleterious effect on efforts to win the hearts and minds of the communities of the northeast, a critical objective to any strategy to defeat Boko Haram.

Military impunity is why I remain leery of the proposed sale of Super Tucano fighter aircraft to Nigeria. Now is not the time for the United States to focus on the provision of aircraft and heavy munitions, especially in the wake of the Nigerian Airforce's bombing of a camp for IDPs last month that may have killed up to 200 innocent people and injured many more. Make no mistake. I support security assistance provided in compliance with the Leahy laws. But I support assistance that will have an actual impact on the Nigerian military's effectiveness. Lack of airpower or munitions are not its problem. The real impediments to success include poor command and control, insufficient air to ground coordination, impunity for human rights abuses, and little to no experience working with local communities and humanitarian partners. Addressing those issues could have an enormous impact on the ground.

To help Nigeria respond to the challenges in the northeast, I urge the new administration to take three steps immediately. First, increase our overall humanitarian assistance budget. The administration should ensure that the President's budget request for fiscal year 2018 provides increased baseline funding for all foreign assistance programs. Such funding is currently 30 percent lower than it was in fiscal year 2010, and it is critical that we return baseline funding to a normal and sustainable level following several years of inadequate requests. An approach that erodes baseline funding while temporarily substituting emergency funds is not workable if the United States wants to continue to set an example in the world. An increase in the budget will enable us to make a significant pledge at the February 24 donors conference in Oslo. We have been generous, but the scale of the emergency demands that we—and our partners—do more. The United States has always led the international response to emergencies such as these, and we must continue to do so. But we can't get blood from a rock. There is no way we can provide adequate money to help the traumatized people in Nigeria and other countries of the Lake Chad basin unless we ensure that the budget for humanitarian assistance is robust without relying on transient funding like OCO. I encourage the administration to continue to inform Congress of the status of the humanitarian response, so that we can work as a unified government to help the people of Nigeria overcome the destruction left in the wake of Boko Haram.

Nor can we afford a draconian cut to our contributions to international organizations. The World Food Program, WFP, is just beginning to scale up its operations in northeastern Nigeria. But it is under enormous strain. In December, the organization was forced to cut the amount of food it is providing to people in the Central African Republic due to insufficient resources. In fact, funding for CAR is so scarce that in 2016 it was able to give aid to less than a third the number of people it aimed to support. A new drought in Ethiopia has left 5.6 million people in urgent need of assistance according to authorities. The U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Somalia, Peter de Clercq, warned earlier this month that, without a massive scale up in assistance, parts of Somalia may face famine. Needs in South Sudan continue to rise, with warnings of famine on the horizon. Slashing funding to WFP would be incredibly unwise, as would deep cuts to UNFPA. Women have suffered enormously in this conflict. UNFPA is on the ground supporting mechanisms to both prevent and respond to gender-based violence and care for pregnant women and newborns. We cannot let the specific needs of women and girls go unmet.

Second, the new administration must work with career experts to surge our capacity on the ground. The administration needs to make clear that the current hiring freeze will not affect lifesaving efforts here or abroad, and Embassy Abuja should approve USAID's request to station additional humanitarian experts at post as quickly as possible. We need experienced people working with the Nigerian Government and the international community to coordinate more effective aid delivery. I applaud the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, for dispatching a disaster assistance response team, DART, to Nigeria in November to support government of Nigeria-led efforts to reduce food insecurity in the Boko Haram-affected regions of the country's northeast. The country has not faced a humanitarian emergency like this in a generation. National and state emergency management agencies are overtaxed, have little familiarity with providing a large-scale aid response, and are not accustomed to working with the U.N. in this manner. Our aid professionals can help. Let me be clear; Nigeria must continue to do its part. It is imperative that

President Buhari set a positive cooperative tone with the international community. However, there is no question that we must continue our robust humanitarian response.

Finally, we must get smart about our security assistance. Agreeing to sell planes with more sophisticated targeting systems that will not be on the ground for 2 more years will not fix what is broken with respect to the Nigerian military's response in the north. Right now—today—we and our international partners should redouble our efforts to work with the Nigerians to develop a list of short-term interventions and a long-term plan to address issues related to military professionalism, accountability, improved command and control, more effective communication between and within services, strategic planning, logistics, and auditing. The strategic governance initiative is a step in the right direction, but we must take action that will translate into results in the field as quickly as possible.

The situation in Nigeria is urgent. Few Americans are aware of the importance of Nigeria to the United States or the degree of suffering in northeastern Nigeria, but those of us who are policymakers cannot afford to drop the ball on our support of Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram or for those suffering in the Lake Chad basin. I recognize that it seems to some people that we are being called on to do more now internationally than ever. But we can do this. We are the Nation that conceived the Marshall Plan, worked with allies to execute the Berlin Airlift, and more recently, developed and implemented PEPFAR. We are up to the task. And we are not alone. Where America leads, our partners will follow. And I strongly encourage them to do so. Failure to redouble our efforts in these areas could mean that ISIS will gain a foothold in West Africa for a generation.

I thank my colleagues.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL FRANCIS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the dedicated public service of Paul Francis, who will soon retire as managing director for acquisition and sourcing management with the Government Accountability Office, GAO, a position he has held since 2009. For more than 42 years, Paul has helped the U.S. Congress analyze the $2 trillion in the ships, planes, tactical vehicles, satellites, and scores of other systems and related services that the Department of Defense, DOD, has procured to make our Nation safe. In so doing, Paul has obtained the respect of the Members of this body and the deep affection of his colleagues, who for decades have hewed to his fine example of public service.

An important congressional oversight tool that Paul helped develop at GAO almost 15 years ago is its annual ''Quick Look'' assessment of the Pentagon's procurement of its most expensive, most complicated weapon systems. In these reports and in the hundreds of individual reports that GAO has released on major defense acquisition programs, Paul's teams first identified, and railed—occasionally like a lone voice in the wilderness—against the proliferation of ''concurrent development'' throughout the Pentagon's portfolio of major procurement programs. As Paul and his team observed, this acquisition strategy, which features an excessive overlap between development and production, has exposed the DOD's largest weapons procurement efforts to an undue, high risk of discoveries late in production, often requiring costly redesign, production cut-ins and retrofits—driving up the costs of these programs exponentially, especially those executed carelessly under cost-plus contracts. These observations have been vital to Congress's attempts to reform, among other programs, the joint strike fighter and the aerial refueling tanker programs and provided Congress with a valuable framework for analyzing and overseeing how the DOD spends hundreds of billions of taxpayers' dollars each year.

Since first becoming a member of the Senior Executive Service in 2002, Paul has testified before Congress more than 20 times—sounding the alarm on everything from unmanned aerial vehicles, the Army's Future Combat System, shipbuilding and missile defense programs, and broader issues of acquisition best practices and reform. For more than a decade, I have relied greatly on his clear analysis and recommendations related to the Ford-class aircraft carrier and littoral combat ship programs.

In addition, Paul has been an excellent witness, who counterbalances the Pentagon's complicated, technical, and bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo, which I sometimes think the DOD purposefully uses to resist being understood by a layperson, with cogent, plainspoken, evenhanded, but nuanced assessments. Time and again, Paul has thoughtfully illustrated the practices that should be followed to ensure success, as well as how poorly aligned bureaucratic incentives lead to failure despite well-intentioned individuals. Also noting that all individuals participating in the defense acquisition process ''see their needs as rational and aligned with the national interest, collectively'' and that ''these needs create incentives for pushing programs and encouraging undue optimism, parochialism, and other compromises of good judgment,'' Paul has reminded us that the problems we see in the defense acquisition process are not the fault of any one actor—they are the collective responsibility of all of us.

Paul epitomizes what Congress and the American public value about the Government Accountability Office—the honest broker. In believing that oversight of programs funded by taxpayer dollars represents a sacred trust and in embracing this responsibility aggressively with joy, Paul has been a tireless, effective advocate for both the American taxpayer and the men and women in service to the government's many and varied missions. He has inspired his teams with this notion of resource stewardship, that American taxpayers should get what they have paid for and American warfighters should get the capabilities they need to defend this great Nation.

Paul has received numerous GAO awards during his career, including the Comptroller General's Award and the John Henry Luke Mentoring Award. Leading by example at GAO, he models his own motto, which is ''Be right. Communicate well. Don't leave people in body bags.''

Throughout his remarkable career with GAO, Paul has been supported by a wonderful family, including his wife, Vicky, and two daughters, Sheri and Katie—all of whom are engaged in public service in various ways. We wish Paul a fond farewell and thank him for his distinguished service to Congress and the American public. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING BENNETT LUMBER PRODUCTS, INC.

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, Idaho's small businesses and the entrepreneurs behind them are known for their perseverance and get-it-done mentality. They have a seemingly innate understanding of the importance of delivering the highest quality products and services. Successful small businesses are also known for their commitment to getting the job done right. These qualities are on display in this month's Small Business of the Month. Located in north Idaho's rich timber country, this month's honoree is well known in my home State for its strong commitment to its local community and sustainable forestry. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am pleased to recognize Bennett Lumber Products, Inc., as the Senate Small Business of the Month for February 2017.

Led by a legendary lumberman, Mr. Frank Bennett, Bennett Lumber Products, Inc., is a family-owned and operated company headquartered in Princeton, ID. The company has two highly efficient mills, one in Princeton, ID, and the other in Clarkston, WA. Bennett Lumber also owns and sustainably manages approximately 70,000 acres of forest lands throughout the Northwest. The Idaho location, originally known as Boones' Mill, was purchased by Bennett Lumber in the early 1950s. The company invested in upgrading the old mill's equipment and modernized its processes in order to mill smaller dimension logs with a largely automated milling process. Always at the forefront of innovation in the lumber industry, Bennett Lumber implemented

the use of a mechanical lumber sorter in 1972, which set the company apart as being ahead of its time. In addition to their commitment to innovation and efficiency, owners and employees of Bennett Lumber pride themselves on producing high-quality products while also adhering to sustainable land management principles.

Bennett Lumber also displays a commitment to the communities in which the company operates by contributing to the Idaho Forest Products Commission's Project Learning Tree. This award-winning organization is dedicated to children's environmental education programs that help to teach students about land stewardship. Bennett Lumber also organizes youth summer reading programs, scholarship awards, school forestry tours, 4–H projects, and contributes to the Distinguished Young Women of Idaho Program. I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to the employees and owners of Bennett Lumber Products, Inc., for being selected as the February Small Business of the Month. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to watching your continued growth and success.●

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALEXION PHARMACEUTICALS

● Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am proud to recognize and celebrate the 25th anniversary of Alexion Pharmaceuticals, a company that has brought life-transforming therapies to patients around the world from its headquarters in New Haven, CT. Since its establishment by Leonard Bell in 1992, Alexion has become a global leader in discovering, developing, and delivering therapies for people with devastating and rare disorders. I have always been honored to call Alexion a Connecticut company, and I applaud the life-changing gains in medicine that it has made from the city of New Haven since 1992.

Even while maintaining a commitment to developing new therapies that impact the lives of patients with rare disorders throughout the world, Alexion has always remained committed to its community in Connecticut. Whether it is helping connect individuals who are homeless with temporary work assignments in New Haven, partnering with scientists at the University of Connecticut, or subsidizing public transportation to help students get to their classes at Gateway Community College, Alexion has proven time and time again that its commitment to the people of Connecticut and to its over 1,000 employees in the State is as strong as ever.

On its 25th anniversary, I applaud Alexion and the people who work so tirelessly for Alexion's values and commitment each and every day. Alexion continues changing lives through its medical breakthroughs, and I am so pleased to know that they call Connecticut home. Thank you.●

REMEMBERING WILLARD ''WILL'' P. HEDDLES

● Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I wish to remember the life and legacy of Mr. Willard ''Will'' P. Heddles, a champion of American manufacturing who dedicated much of his life to improving his home—the community of Tiffin, OH.

A native of Colorado, Mr. Heddles moved to Tiffin in the 1970s to oversee Tiffin Art Metal Company. The company was founded at the turn of the century, originally making stamped ornamental ceiling panels. When cars became popular in the 1920s, the company seized the opportunity and began making large billboard frames.

When its parent company wanted to sell the plant, Mr. Heddles wasn't impressed by any of the potential buyers. He knew how important this plant was to his community. So Mr. Heddles organized a management buyout and eventually became the owner of the company, known today as Tiffin Metal Products.

Under Mr. Heddles' leadership, Tiffin Metal Products continued to demonstrate the kind of adaptability and creativity that enables a company to grow and thrive. Today Tiffin Metal Products remains one of the two main manufacturers of large billboards in the country, while also making custom products and a popular brand of specialty lockers for law enforcement.

Mr. Heddles took pride in his role in American manufacturing and in keeping his company true to its Ohio roots. Over the years, Tiffin Metal Products has provided good jobs to hundreds of people in Tiffin and Seneca County, and those workers have shown the world that Ohioans know how to make things and make them well.

Will Heddles also took pride in his community, giving generously to local service programs and the arts and helping establish the Seneca Industrial and Economic Development Corporation, a private nonprofit organization working to drive positive economic and community development in the area.

He will be missed by his family, church, community, and the men and women who have been a part of Tiffin Metal Products, a great Ohio manufacturing success story. I am sure that my Senate colleagues join me in celebrating the life of Mr. Willard P. Heddles and his lifelong commitment to American manufacturing.●

TRIBUTE TO DEBORAH WICKS

● Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise to honor the exemplary service of the Smyrna Delaware School District Superintendent, Deborah Wicks, and recognize her upcoming retirement. For nearly half a century, she has been an exceptional teacher and leader, serving in many positions throughout Delaware's fastest growing school district. Her hard work, perseverance, and dedication will truly be missed by students, parents, and Delawareans up and down our State.

Since 1967, Debbie has played an active and integral role within the Smyrna Delaware School District, serving as a special education teacher for 16 years and an associate principal for 4 years, before serving as the district's superintendent for 19 years. Throughout her time in the district, Debbie has been a key leader, instrumental in the successful completion of many projects like the John Bassett Moore Intermediate School and the School Special Services Building. As she steps down from her position as superintendent in June, I join the many Delawareans she has worked with in thanking Deborah for her diligent efforts to improve the education system for Delaware's children through hard work and diligence.

A native of Smyrna, DE, and educated in the same school system that she serves so faithfully, Debbie has always been a champion for students, teachers, and the local community. Being a champion to Debbie means helping to instill values of integrity, compassion, perseverance, respect, and responsibility—values visible in the hallways and classrooms of the schools in Smyrna and in the hearts of its graduates.

Debbie's success can be attributed not only to a commitment to instill essential values in district students, but also to a genuine passion for the betterment of her community. Her ability to develop and foster community relationships essential to the district's long-term educational success can be seen in numerous completed projects and building upgrades, as well as the annual ''I Love Smyrna School District Day,'' which has drawn close to 7,000 attendees in recent years.

Debbie's work has been nothing short of inspirational, and we are sincerely grateful for all that she has done on behalf of the students and families of Smyrna. Her model leadership and dedication has touched so many lives in Smyrna and beyond. It is my privilege to offer my sincerest congratulations on a job well done and wish her many happy, healthy, and successful years to come.●

VALLEY COUNTY'S CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, my colleague Senator JIM RISCH joins me today in recognizing Valley County, ID, on its 100-year anniversary of its establishment by the Idaho State Legislature in 1917.

Valley County's rich natural resources and landscapes have long been a draw for the determined and industrious. The Native Americans, packers, prospectors, miners, homesteaders, trappers, ranchers, loggers, farmers, recreationists, conservationists, and more who have made homes in and traversed the county have contributed to its deep and fascinating history and shaped its culture. This expansive

county—approximately 2.4 million acres and roughly 3.7 thousand square miles—encompasses hundreds of lakes, three national forests, rivers, fish and wildlife habitat, streams, grassland, and mountainous landscapes. It is no wonder the county's stunning terrain continues to attract those who enjoy the outdoors.

The county's splendor and ruggedness are matched by the grace and determination of the more than 9,000 Idahoans who make the area home. Over the years, Valley County residents have faced booms and downturns in the mining, logging, and agriculture sectors with resilience and continue to forge ahead with collaborative efforts to increase economic opportunities. Mining, fueled by the Idaho Gold Rush, has roots in the county stretching back more than a century. Logging has also been a historically central part of the county's economic base, and efforts to reestablish these sectors continue.

We wish the residents of Valley County all the best as they seek advancements in tourism and innovation for this important part of our great State. Congratulations on this significant milestone in Valley County's history and 100 years of achievements.●

TRIBUTE TO ELLEN WOOD

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing Ellen Wood of Winnett. Ellen has been serving up hospitality to the folks in Petroleum County for the past 25 years. Her culinary prowess have also pleased the tastebuds of many others well beyond her central Montana community.

In 1992, Ellen decided it was time to make an occupational change and purchased the Kozy Korner Bar and Cafe. It was not long after that The Kozy Korner became known for its delicious pies. Hunters, ranchers, tourists, and locals are all fortunate if they get a slice. Some even call ahead just to make sure they will not leave empty handed. You know a pie is good when you have to make reservations. Ellen has even shipped her homemade pies to repeat customers around the country. In addition to her pies, Gourmet Magazine did an article in 2005 on Ellen's plate-sized pancakes. It is no wonder that every 5 years during the Winnett all-school class reunion, the Kozy Korner serves as a hub of activity for the local community. A quarter century of hospitality and service to her neighbors and guests is a great accomplishment.

Being a small business owner is tough work, but Ellen had a trusted partner in her husband, Buck. He was U.S. Marine Corps veteran with over 4 years of service in Vietnam. He helped her run the Kozy Korner until he passed away in 2014. Today Buck's Bacon Cheeseburger is still one of the favorite menu items for Kozy Korner patrons. Hometown cafes are a staple of our Montana communities and so are people like Ellen and Buck. With that community spirit in mind, it is an honor to say thank you to Ellen for making a corner of Petroleum County a comfortable place to visit. If you are going to stop in, just remember to call ahead if you want a piece of the marionberry pie.●

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL TIMOTHY J. CATHCART

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the accomplishments of an exceptional Alaskan, Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Cathcart, U.S. Air Force, currently serving as director, Office of Legislative Liaison, National Guard Bureau. He will retire on May 31, 2017, after more than 32 years of honorable service. A master navigator, Brigadier General Cathcart has executed more than 75 operational rescue missions, has over 2,000 flight hours, and has served in a variety of operational, training, command, Air Staff, and joint positions.

Brigadier General Cathcart enlisted in the Alaska Air National Guard in 1985 and received his commission in 1990 through the Academy of Military Science. Upon completion of navigator training in 1992, he returned to the Alaska Air National Guard as a rescue navigator on the HC–130 aircraft and then served as senior controller at the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center. While serving, Brigadier General Cathcart earned a master of business administration and a master of science in computer science from the University of Alaska. In 2000, he was selected as the mobility forces action officer in the Air and Space Operations Directorate at the National Guard Bureau. After 2 years, Brigadier General Cathcart was promoted to mobility forces branch chief and later went on to serve as the operations support branch chief.

In 2005, Brigadier General Cathcart was selected to attend the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, earning a master of science in National Resource Strategy. Following graduation, he served at the Pentagon as the National Guard readiness adviser, Operations Directorate, Joint Staff, while concurrently earning a doctor of philosophy, Ph.D., in Science and Technology Studies from Virginia Tech. From 2008 to 2011, Brigadier General Cathcart served as chief, Joint Training and Education Division, Joint Doctrine, Training, and Force Development Directorate, followed by a position as deputy director for Force Development, Domestic Operations and Force Development Directorate on the National Guard Bureau Joint Staff. From 2011 to 2014, he served as commander of the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center at McGee Tyson ANGB, TN, followed by the General Officer Homeland Security Executive Seminar at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Prior to his current position as director of legislative liaison, Brigadier General Cathcart was a special assistant to the director, Air National Guard, assigned to the Air Staff's total force-continuum office. In this role, on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force, he worked to identify the appropriate balance of active and reserve components across missions and platforms and helped reduce legal, organizational, policy, and cultural barriers to a more fully integrated Air Force.

As director, Office of Legislative Liaison, Brigadier General Cathcart is the primary adviser to the chief, National Guard Bureau, on all matters of congressional interest and provides guidance and direction in the development of the National Guard Bureau legislative strategy. He ceaselessly and effectively supported all Air and Army National Guard roles and missions both State and Federal. Brigadier General Cathcart's efforts advanced an unprecedented level of integration and collaboration within the Department of Defense, as well as with State, interagency, and non-Federal entity partners. He educated and informed decisionmakers within the executive as well as legislative branches of U.S. Government to support National Guard priorities, personnel, and resource requirements, resulting in support and funding for core programs in fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2017 legislation.

Brigadier General Cathcart's extraordinary career of visionary leadership and highly successful implementation of innovative cutting-edge concepts leaves behind a remarkable legacy of success. His years of dedicated service in the U.S. Air Force and the National Guard represent lifelong dedication and commitment to the defense of our great Nation.

I wish to express my gratitude to Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Cathcart for his many years of distinguished service to this country.●

REMEMBERING ANNIE CARROLL WYCHE

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, when I am home in Anchorage this weekend, I plan to attend the grand opening of Roscoe's Food for the Soul Restaurant at the Aviator Hotel. Last December, the Alaska Dispatch News noted that the name Roscoe's has been synonymous in Anchorage with soul food for decades. The original Roscoe's was a father and son enterprise. Roscoe Wyche, Jr., opened the restaurant on Government Hill with his son Roscoe Wyche III in 1988. Roscoe's Food for the Soul continues the family tradition. It is a partnership of Roscoe Wyche III, now 56, and his son, Roscoe Wyche IV, who goes by the moniker ''Roc.'' Roscoe III told the Alaska Dispatch News that he was passing the torch just like his dad did—a very sweet story.

But this weekend's opening will be a tad bittersweet. The matriarch of the

family, Annie Carroll Wyche, Roscoe's mother and Roc's grandmother, passed away on January 18, 2017. Ms. Carol, as she was known, was an entrepreneur in her own right. A native of Thomasville, GA, Ms. Carol came to Anchorage with her late husband, Roscoe Wyche, Jr., who served in the Air Force. Shortly after his retirement, they formed two beauty businesses. Top of the Hill Beauty Salon and Top of the Line Beauty Supply. That was Ms. Carol's domain. Ms. Carol was also a partner in her husband's restaurants. Ms. Carol is remembered for a beautiful spirit, which showed in her smile. She leaves behind a large family. There is no doubt that her entrepreneurial spirit lives on in Roscoe's Food for the Soul.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 42. Joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to drug testing of unemployment compensation applicants.

H.J. Res. 66. Joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by States for non-governmental employees.

H.J. Res. 67. Joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276l, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the British-American Interparliamentary Group: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 12:42 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled joint resolution:

H.J. Res. 40. Joint resolution 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.

The enrolled joint resolution was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–677. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002; Biennial Review and Republication of the Select Agent and Toxin List; Amendments to the Select Agent and Toxin Regulations'' ((RIN0579–AE08) (Docket No. APHIS–2014–0095)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–678. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Community Reinvestment Act Regulations'' (RIN3064–AD90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–679. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Adjustments to Civil Monetary Penalty Amounts'' (17 CFR Part 201) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–680. A communication from the Assistant Director for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations'' (31 CFR Part 560) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–681. A communication from the Program Specialist of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Economic Growth and Regulatory Paperwork Reduction Act of 1996 Amendments'' (RIN1557–AD95) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–682. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for General Service Lamps'' (RIN1904–AD09) received in the Office of the President of Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–683. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Dedicated-Purpose Pool Pumps'' (RIN1904–AD52) received in the Office of the President of Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–684. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of General Counsel, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Adjustment of Civil Penalties for Inflation for FY 2017'' ((RIN3150–AJ82) (NRC–2016–0165)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–685. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–686. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Town of Princeville, North Carolina, project; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–687. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the City of Diomede, Island of Little Diomede, Alaska, project; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–688. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–689. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Portland, Oregon, project; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–690. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Upper Ohio Navigation Study, Pennsylvania; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–691. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Individual Shared Responsibility Payment Hardship Exemption that May Be Claimed on a Federal Income Tax Return Without Obtaining a Hardship Exemption Certification from the Marketplace'' (Notice 2017–14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–692. A communication from the Acting General Counsel, Peace Corps, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Director of the Peace Corps, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–693. A communication from the Acting General Counsel, Peace Corps, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–694. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–695. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Student Assistance General Provisions'' (RIN1840–AD22) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–696. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Student Assistance General Provisions'' (RIN1840–AD22) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–697. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of General Counsel, Department of

Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Open Licensing Requirement for Competitive Grant Programs'' (RIN1894–AA07) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–698. A communication from the Director of the Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Examinations of Working Places in Metal and Nonmetal Mines'' (RIN1219–AB87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–699. A communication from the Attorney-Adviser, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2017 Civil Monetary Penalties Inflationary Adjustment'' (RIN1400–AE09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–700. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs'' received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–701. A communication from the Solicitor, Federal Labor Relations Authority, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Federal Labor Relations Authority, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–702. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Annual Report to Congress on the implementation, enforcement, and prosecution of registration requirements under Section 635 of the Adam Walsh Child Protection Act of 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–703. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the activities of the Community Relations Service for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–704. A communication from the Office Program Manager of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Recognition of Tribal Organizations for Representation of VA Claimants'' (RIN2900–AP51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–705. A communication from the Chief of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fertility Counseling and Treatment for Certain Veterans and Spouses'' (RIN2900–AP94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–706. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Pleasure Beach Bridge, Bridgeport, CT'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2015–1088)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–707. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Pipeline Canal, Orange, TX'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2016–1051)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–708. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Lower Mississippi River, Natchez, MS'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2016–1017)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–709. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; James River, Newport News, VA'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2016–0987)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–710. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; 2016 Recreational Closure for Hogfish in the South Atlantic'' (RIN0648–XF042) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–711. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery Off the Southern Atlantic States; Regulatory Amendment 16'' (RIN0648–BD78) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–712. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2016 Commercial Accountability Measures and Closure for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia'' (RIN0648–XF056) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–713. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Possession and Trip Limit Modifications for the Common Pool Fishery'' (RIN0648–XF074) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–714. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for the State of New York'' (RIN0648–XF043) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–715. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota Transfer'' (RIN0648–XF069) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–716. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Inseason Adjustment to the 2017 Gulf of Alaska Pollock and Pacific Cod Total Allowable Catch Amounts'' (RIN0648–XF104) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–717. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries Off West Coast States; Coastal Pelagic Species Fisheries; Annual Specifications'' (RIN0648–XE568) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–718. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reopening of Recreational Sector for the South Atlantic Other Jacks Complex'' (RIN0648–XF046) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–719. A communication from the Chairman of the Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Dispute Resolution Procedures Under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015'' (RIN2140–AB30) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–720. A communication from the Chairman of the Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revised Inspection of Records and Related Fees'' (RIN2140–AB34) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–721. A communication from the Chairman of the Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Civil Monetary Penalties—2017 Adjustment'' (Docket No. EP 716) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–722. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary/Administrator, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–723. A communication from the Chief of the Satellite Division, International Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Terrestrial Use of the 2473–2495 MHz Band for Low-Power Mobile Broadband Networks; Amendments to Rules for the Ancillary Terrestrial Component of Mobile Satellite Service Systems'' ((IB Docket No. 13–213) (FCC 16–181)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–724. A communication from the Assistant Chief Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pipeline Safety: Operator Qualification, Cost Recovery, Accident and Incident Notification, and Other Pipeline Safety Changes'' (RIN2137–AE94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. SHELBY, from the Committee on Rules and Administration, without amendment:

S. Res. 62. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017, October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, and October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019.

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. COONS (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 405. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide an exclusion from income for student loan forgiveness for students who have died or become disabled; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. LEE):

S. 406. A bill to repeal certain amendments made to rule 41 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. HELLER, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 407. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. REED):

S. 408. A bill to require the President to disclose income, assets, and liabilities associated with countries with which the United States is negotiating a trade or investment agreement, countries subject to presidential determinations in trade enforcement actions, and countries eligible for trade preference programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. PAUL):

S. 409. A bill to provide that the President must seek congressional approval before engaging members of the United States Armed Forces in military humanitarian operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CRAPO:

S. 410. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the transfer of unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits to additional dependents upon the death of the originally designated dependent; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 411. A bill to eliminate racial, religious, and other discriminatory profiling by law enforcement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 412. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require State and local coordination on cybersecurity with the national cybersecurity and communications integration center, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 413. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit prescription drug plan sponsors and MA–PD organizations under the Medicare program from retroactively reducing payment on clean claims submitted by pharmacies; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 414. A bill to promote conservation, improve public land management, and provide for sensible development in Pershing County, Nevada, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 415. A bill to nullify the effect of the recent executive order that makes the vast majority of unauthorized individuals priorities for removal and aims to withhold critical Federal funding to sanctuary cities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 416. A bill to amend the Small Business Investment Incentive Act of 1980 to require an annual review by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the annual government-business forum on capital formation; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 417. A bill to reinstate reporting requirements related to United States-Hong Kong relations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. COONS):

S. 418. A bill to require reporting on the implementation of Government Accountability Office recommendations by the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. COONS):

S. 419. A bill to require adequate reporting on the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SASSE, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 420. A bill to require the President to report on the use by the Government of Iran of commercial aircraft and related services for illicit military or other activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. UDALL):

S. 421. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to protect low-income Lifeline subscribers by mandating a continuing role for States in designating eligible telecommunications carriers for participation in the Universal Service program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. WARREN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KAINE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WARNER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 422. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, and Mr. UDALL):

S. 423. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 424. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to include certain Federal positions within the definition of law enforcement officer for retirement purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 425. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the historic rehabilitation tax credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 426. A bill to increase educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training of physician assistants of the Department, to establish pay grades and require competitive

pay for physician assistants of the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 427. A bill to enhance Social Security benefits and ensure the long-term solvency of the Social Security program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BROWN, Mr. GARDNER, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 428. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to authorize States to provide coordinated care to children with complex medical conditions through enhanced pediatric health homes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. PAUL):

S. 429. A bill to exempt the aging process of distilled spirits from the production period for purposes of capitalization of interest costs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 430. A bill to provide for compliance enforcement regarding Russian violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 431. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the use of telehealth for individuals with stroke; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. 432. A bill to designate the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Areas in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 433. A bill for the relief of Malachy McAllister, Nicola McAllister, and Sean Ryan McAllister; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 434. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to qualify homeless youth and veterans who are full-time students for purposes of the low income housing tax credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 435. A bill to establish programs to improve family economic security by breaking the cycle of multigenerational poverty, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. 436. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, to substitute certain land selections of the Navajo Nation, to designate certain wilderness areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 437. A bill to provide for environmental oversight and remediation activities at Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S.J. Res. 23. A joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to drug testing of unemployment compensation applicants; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. SHELBY:

S. Res. 62. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017, October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, and October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019; from the Committee on Rules and Administration; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. Res. 63. A resolution expressing support for the designation of the week of October 29 through November 4, 2017, as ''National Obesity Care Week''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 16

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 16, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 27

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 27, a bill to establish an independent commission to examine and report on the facts regarding the extent of Russian official and unofficial cyber operations and other attempts to interfere in the 2016 United States national election, and for other purposes.

S. 37

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 37, a bill to require U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to take into custody certain aliens who have been charged in the United States with a crime that resulted in the death or serious bodily injury of another person, and for other purposes.

S. 65

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 65, a bill to address financial conflicts of interest of the President and Vice President.

S. 108

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 108, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 109

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 109, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 150

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 150, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide an additional tool to prevent certain frauds against veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to provide for nonpreemption of measures by State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 203

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 203, a bill to reaffirm that the Environmental Protection Agency may not regulate vehicles used solely for competition, and for other purposes.

S. 236

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 236, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 242

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 242, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to permit veterans to grant access to their records in the databases of the Veterans Benefits Administration to certain designated congressional employees, and for other purposes.

S. 251

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 251, a bill to repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board in order to ensure that it cannot be used to undermine the Medicare entitlement for beneficiaries.

S. 294

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 294, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars.

S. 301

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) 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. 315

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 324, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 350

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 350, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to prohibit Members of Congress from receiving a discounted price in certain private offerings of securities.

S. 368

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 368, a bill to require the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to issue a scientifically valid and State-supported recovery plan for the Mexican gray wolf.

S. 379

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 379, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five month waiting period for disability insurance benefits under such title for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

S.J. RES. 5

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 5, a joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

S.J. RES. 16

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 16, a joint resolution approving the discontinuation of the process for consideration and automatic implementation of the annual proposal of the Independent Medicare Advisory Board under section 1899A of the Social Security Act.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. REED):

S. 408. A bill to require the President to disclose income, assets, and liabilities associated with countries with which the United States is negotiating a trade or investment agreement, countries subject to presidential determinations in trade enforcement actions, and countries eligible for trade preference programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I, along with 13 of my Senate colleagues, am introducing the Presidential Trade Transparency Act of 2017. This bill establishes new reporting requirements directing the President to disclose foreign income, assets, and liabilities when initiating or continuing trade or investment negotiations with a foreign country, taking or refraining to take certain trade enforcement actions, or granting or modifying preferential tariff treatment under statutory trade preference programs. Each of these decisions may have significant commercial implications, both as to a foreign country's economy as a whole and with respect to particular investments within a foreign country. Given the complexity and lack of transparency with respect to the President's finances, additional country-specific reporting is necessary for Congress to properly exercise its oversight responsibilities and assess whether the authority it has granted to the President is the subject of undue influence due to a business relationship between the President and one or more foreign entities. Reporting of this information will also help address questions regarding improper influence by foreign entities when the President exercises trade authorities granted by Congress.

Americans have a right to know if the President is looking out for the good of the country or just his own bottom line when he negotiates a trade deal, decides whether or not to enforce our trade laws, or decides whether to cut tariffs on imports from a developing country. The President has business interests around the world, but he continues to keep the full nature of those ties secret.

Under the Constitution, Congress is responsible for regulating foreign commerce, including setting U.S. tariff rates applicable to imports from foreign countries. However, Congress has granted the President limited authority to modify U.S. tariffs in certain circumstances, including to enforce U.S. laws protecting U.S. industry from harmful trade or to address foreign trade barriers, to negotiate trade agreements that eliminate foreign barriers to U.S. exports, and to grant developing countries preferential access to the U.S. market.

In many instances, the President himself is granted this authority and does not exercise it through a Cabinet official. While Congress has granted such authority to the President, it retains the responsibility to ensure that the President uses the authority in a manner consistent with congressional objectives.

The bill directs the President to report to Congress information regarding foreign income, assets, and liabilities, consistent with the information required to be disclosed under the Ethics in Government Act, specifically as to any country that is the subject of a trade negotiation, trade enforcement action or inaction, or decision to grant or deny tariff preferences, and to describe in detail the nature of the connection between the income, asset, or liability and the foreign country. The bill specifies deadlines for disclosure of the information with respect to each action that generally track existing deadlines for Presidential reporting under U.S. law.

Failure to timely submit a report would render without legal effect a Presidential proclamation modifying U.S. tariffs with respect to the country and, with respect to a trade agreement, would disqualify the agreement from eligibility for expedited consideration under trade promotion authority.

Passage of this bill would close a key loophole in congressional oversight authorities over trade and shine much needed daylight on the financial relationship between the President and America's trading partners.

I thank my colleagues for their efforts on this bill, and I hope the Finance Committee will consider our proposal quickly.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 424. A bill to amend title 5, United Stated Code, to include certain Federal positions within the definition of law enforcement officer for retirement purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to reintroduce the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act. This good-government bill will provide Federal law enforcement officers with the Federal benefits they deserve for their service. I thank Senator Rob Portman for being an original cosponsor of this bill.

There is perhaps no harder job in the United States than that of law enforcement officers. Each day, brave men and women work under tremendously stressful conditions to keep our communities safe. From apprehending violent criminals to arresting drug kingpins, these brave men and women in uniform put their lives on the line for a higher cause. We owe them our sincerest gratitude for their service.

Due to the high level of training required for their job and the ever-present danger in their profession, Congress determined that Federal law enforcement officers should receive higher salaries and enhanced benefits compared to other Federal employees. Unfortunately, due to a technical error,

nearly 30,000 Federal law enforcement officers classified as G5–0083 police officers do not receive enhanced benefits under the United States Code. As a result, certain officers who work for Federal agencies—such as the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Mint, National Institute of Health and many more—receive lower pensions as compared to other law enforcement officers with similar responsibilities. It makes no sense that postal police officers or any other Federal law enforcement officers receive less benefits even though they have the similar duties and functions as other law enforcement officers.

The Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act would fill in this gap in the law and expand the number of Federal law enforcement officers who can receive benefits. The bill would expand the definition of ''law enforcement officer'' for retirement purposes to include all Federal law enforcement officers. The change would grant law enforcement officer status to the following individuals: employees who are authorized to carry a firearm and whose duties include the investigation or apprehension of suspected criminals; employees of the Internal Revenue Service whose duties are primarily the collection of delinquent taxes and securing delinquent returns; employees of the U.S Postal Inspection Service; and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are Department police offices. These officers face the same risks and challenges as the men and women currently classified properly under Federal law as law

The Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act would allow incumbent law enforcement officers' Federal service—after the enactment of the act—to be considered service performed as a law enforcement officer for retirement purposes.

This legislation has the support of law enforcement groups, including the Fraternal Order of police, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers' Association, and the Law Enforcement Action Network.

Fundamental fairness demands that we close this loophole in Federal law and give all Federal law enforcement officers the retirement benefits they deserve-Trask my colleagues to support the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act, and I urge its speedy passage.

By Mr. McCONNELL (for himself and Mr. PAUL):

S. 429. A bill to exempt the aging process of distilled spirits from the production period for purposes of capitalization of interest costs; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 429

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 ''Advancing Growth in the Economy through Distilled Spirits Act'' or the ''AGED Spirits Act''.

SEC. 2. PRODUCTION PERIOD OF DISTILLED SPIRITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 263A(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5), and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph:

''(4) EXEMPTION FOR AGING PROCESS OF DISTILLED SPIRITS.—For purposes of this subsection, the production period shall not include the aging period for distilled spirits (as described in section 5002(a)(8)), except such spirits that are unfit for use for beverage purposes.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (5)(B)(ii) of section 263A(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as redesignated by this section, is amended by inserting ''except as provided in paragraph (4),'' before ''ending on the date''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to interest costs paid or incurred in taxable years ending on or after December 31, 2018.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 62—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE FOR THE PERIODS MARCH 1, 2017 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2017, OCTOBER 1, 2017 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2018, AND OCTOBER 1, 2018 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2019

Mr. SHELBY submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Rules and Administration; which was placed on the calendar:

S. RES. 62

Resolved,

SECTION 1. AGGREGATE AUTHORIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of carrying out the powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, and under the appropriate authorizing resolutions of the Senate, there is authorized for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017, in the aggregate of $57,801,217, for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, in the aggregate of $99,087,800, and for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019, in the aggregate of $41,286,584, in accordance with the provisions of this resolution, for standing committees of the Senate, the Special Committee on Aging, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Indian Affairs.

(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 committees for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017, for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, and for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019.

(c) EXPENSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of each standing committee of the Senate, the Special Committee on Aging, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Indian Affairs under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the applicable 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.

SEC. 2. COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $2,463,834, of which—

(1) not to exceed $200,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $4,223,716, of which—

(1) not to exceed $200,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $1,759,882, of which—

(1) not to exceed $200,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Armed Services is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,783,845, of which—

(1) not to exceed $46,667 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $17,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $6,486,591, of which—

(1) not to exceed $80,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $30,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,702,746, of which—

(1) not to exceed $33,334 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $12,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 4. COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,119,153, of which—

(1) not to exceed $8,370 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $503 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $5,347,119, of which—

(1) not to exceed $14,348 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $861 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,227,966, of which—

(1) not to exceed $5,978 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $358 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 5. COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 the Budget is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,534,372, of which—

(1) not to exceed $35,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $21,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $6,058,924, of which—

(1) not to exceed $60,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $36,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,524,552, of which—

(1) not to exceed $25,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $15,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 6. COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,879,581, of which—

(1) not to exceed $50,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $6,650,710, of which—

(1) not to exceed $50,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for

the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,771,129, of which—

(1) not to exceed $50,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 7. COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Energy and Natural Resources is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,219,522.

(c) 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 $5,519,181.

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,299,659.

SEC. 8. COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Environment and Public Works is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,060,871, of which—

(1) not to exceed $4,666 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $1,166 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $5,247,208, of which—

(1) not to exceed $8,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $2,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,186,337, of which—

(1) not to exceed $3,334 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $834 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 9. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $4,710,670, of which—

(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 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); 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 that Act).

(c) 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 $8,075,434, of which—

(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 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); 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 that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $3,364,764, of which—

(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 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); 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 that Act).

SEC. 10. COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Foreign Relations is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,889,028, of which—

(1) not to exceed $150,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $6,666,904, of which—

(1) not to exceed $150,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,777,877, of which—

(1) not to exceed $150,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 11. COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $5,105,487, of which—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $8,752,264, of which—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $3,646,777, of which—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 12. COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and S. Res. 445, agreed to October 9, 2004 (108th Congress), 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 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $5,591,653, of which—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $9,585,691, of which—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $3,994,038, of which—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(e) INVESTIGATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The committee, or any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee, is authorized to study or investigate—

(A) the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches of the Government including the possible existence of fraud, misfeasance, malfeasance, collusion, mismanagement, incompetence, corruption or unethical practices, waste, extravagance, conflicts of interest, and the improper expenditure of Government funds in transactions, contracts, and activities of the Government or of Government officials and employees and any and all such improper practices between Government personnel and corporations, individuals, companies, or persons affiliated therewith, doing business with the Government, and the compliance or noncompliance of such corporations, companies, or individuals or other entities with the rules, regulations, and laws governing the various governmental agencies and the Government's relationships with the public;

(B) the extent to which criminal or other improper practices or activities are, or have been, engaged in the field of labor-management relations or in groups or organizations of employees or employers, to the detriment of interests of the public, employers, or employees, and to determine whether any changes are required in the laws of the United States in order to protect such interests against the occurrence of such practices or activities;

(C) organized criminal activity which may operate in or otherwise utilize the facilities of interstate or international commerce in furtherance of any transactions and the manner and extent to which, and the identity of the persons, firms, or corporations, or other entities by whom such utilization is being made, and further, to study and investigate the manner in which and the extent to which persons engaged in organized criminal activity have infiltrated lawful business enterprise, and to study the adequacy of Federal laws to prevent the operations of organized crime in interstate or international commerce, and to determine whether any changes are required in the laws of the United States in order to protect the public against such practices or activities;

(D) all other aspects of crime and lawlessness within the United States which have an impact upon or affect the national health, welfare, and safety, including investment fraud schemes, commodity and security fraud, computer fraud, and the use of offshore banking and corporate facilities to carry out criminal objectives;

(E) the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches and functions of the Government with particular reference to—

(i) the effectiveness of present national security methods, staffing, and processes as tested against the requirements imposed by the rapidly mounting complexity of national security problems;

(ii) the capacity of present national security staffing, methods, and processes to make full use of the Nation's resources of knowledge and talents;

(iii) the adequacy of present intergovernmental relations between the United States and international organizations principally concerned with national security of which the United States is a member; and

(iv) legislative and other proposals to improve these methods, processes, and relationships;

(F) the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government involved in the control and management of energy shortages including their performance with respect to—

(i) the collection and dissemination of accurate statistics on fuel demand and supply;

(ii) the implementation of effective energy conservation measures;

(iii) the pricing of energy in all forms;

(iv) coordination of energy programs with State and local government;

(v) control of exports of scarce fuels;

(vi) the management of tax, import, pricing, and other policies affecting energy supplies;

(vii) maintenance of the independent sector of the petroleum industry as a strong competitive force;

(viii) the allocation of fuels in short supply by public and private entities;

(ix) the management of energy supplies owned or controlled by the Government;

(x) relations with other oil producing and consuming countries;

(xi) the monitoring of compliance by governments, corporations, or individuals with the laws and regulations governing the allocation, conservation, or pricing of energy supplies; and

(xii) research into the discovery and development of alternative energy supplies; and

(G) the efficiency and economy of all branches and functions of Government with particular references to the operations and management of Federal regulatory policies and programs.

(2) EXTENT OF INQUIRIES.—In carrying out the duties provided in paragraph (1), the inquiries of this committee or any subcommittee of the committee shall not be construed to be limited to the records, functions, and operations of any particular branch of the Government and may extend to the records and activities of any persons, corporation, or other entity.

(3) SPECIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORITY.—For the purposes of this subsection, the committee, or any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee, or its chairman, or any other member of the committee or subcommittee designated by the chairman

is authorized, in its, his, her, or their discretion—

(A) to require by subpoena or otherwise the attendance of witnesses and production of correspondence, books, papers, and documents;

(B) to hold hearings;

(C) to sit and act at any time or place during the sessions, recess, and adjournment periods of the Senate;

(D) to administer oaths; and

(E) to take testimony, either orally or by sworn statement, or, in the case of staff members of the Committee and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, by deposition in accordance with the Committee Rules of Procedure.

(4) AUTHORITY OF OTHER COMMITTEES.—Nothing contained in this subsection shall affect or impair the exercise of any other standing committee of the Senate of any power, or the discharge by such committee of any duty, conferred or imposed upon it by the Standing Rules of the Senate or by the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946.

(5) SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.—All subpoenas and related legal processes of the committee and any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee authorized under S. Res. 73, agreed to February 12, 2015 (114th Congress) are authorized to continue.

SEC. 13. COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 the Judiciary is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $5,461,388, of which—

(1) not to exceed $116,667 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $11,667 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $9,362,379, of which—

(1) not to exceed $200,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $3,900,991, of which—

(1) not to exceed $83,333 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $8,333 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(e) ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE AUTHORITY.—For the purposes of carrying out its investigative powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate and in accordance with Committee Rules of Procedure, the committee is authorized to require by subpoena the attendance of witnesses at depositions of the committee, which may be conducted by designated staff.

SEC. 14. COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Rules and Administration 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.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of such committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $1,375,819, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $43,750 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $7,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 PERIOD.—The expenses of such committee for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018 under this section shall not exceed $2,358,546, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $12,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of such committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $982,728, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $31,250 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $5,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 15. COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $1,520,944, of which—

(1) not to exceed $25,000 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))); 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 that Act).

(c) 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 $2,607,332, of which—

(1) not to exceed $25,000 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))); 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 that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $1,086,388, of which—

(1) not to exceed $25,000 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))); 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 that Act).

SEC. 16. COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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 Veterans' Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $1,283,522, of which—

(1) not to exceed $2,900 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $1,750 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $2,200,323, of which—

(1) not to exceed $5,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $3,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $916,801, of which—

(1) not to exceed $2,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $1,250 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 17. SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions imposed by section 104 of S. Res. 4, agreed to February 4, 1977 (95th Congress), and in exercising the authority conferred on it by such section, the Special Committee on Aging is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $1,399,763, of which—

(1) not to exceed $3,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $3,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $2,399,594, of which—

(1) not to exceed $6,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $6,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $999,831, of which—

(1) not to exceed $2,500 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 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 18. SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE.

(a) 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 is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $3,217,448, of which 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))).

(c) 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 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))).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $2,298,177, of which not to exceed $7,143 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. 19. COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions imposed by section 105 of S. Res. 4, agreed to February 4, 1977 (95th Congress), and in exercising the authority conferred on it by that section, the Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2017 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 nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this section shall not exceed $1,184,317, of which—

(1) not to exceed $20,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) 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 $2,030,258, of which—

(1) not to exceed $20,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for training consultants of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this section shall not exceed $845,941, of which—

(1) not to exceed $20,000 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))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for training consultants of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 20. SPECIAL RESERVE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Within the funds in the account ''Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations'', there is authorized to be established a special reserve to be available to any committee funded by this resolution as provided in subsection (b) of which—

(1) for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7 percent of the amount equal to 7/12th of the appropriations for the account that are available for the period October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017;

(2) for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7 percent of the appropriations for the account that are available for that period; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7 percent of the amount equal to 5/12th of the appropriations for the account that are available for the period October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—The special reserve authorized in subsection (a) shall be available to any committee—

(1) on the basis of special need to meet unpaid obligations incurred by that committee during the periods referred to in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subsection (a); and

(2) at the request of a Chairman and Ranking Member of that committee subject to the approval of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Rules and Administration.

SENATE RESOLUTION 63—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 29 THROUGH NOVEMBER 4, 2017, AS ''NATIONAL OBESITY CARE WEEK''

Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 63

Whereas the disease of obesity is a major source of concern across the United States, and more than one-third of adults in the United States are affected by obesity, with the number of people with severe obesity in the United States continuing to grow;

Whereas experts and researchers agree that obesity is a complex disease influenced by various physiological, environmental, and genetic factors;

Whereas, while prevention programs have successfully established the seriousness of the public health crisis posed by obesity, it is also imperative that individuals and families currently affected by obesity receive comprehensive care and treatment;

Whereas studies show that bias against and stigma associated with people affected by obesity among general society and healthcare professionals are significant barriers to effectively treating the disease;

Whereas healthcare professionals, policymakers, patients, and families should regard obesity with the same level of seriousness with which other chronic diseases are regarded;

Whereas research suggests that weight loss of as little as 5 to 10 percent of the total weight of an individual affected by obesity can improve the associated health risks affecting many patients living with obesity and can thereby support the goals of Federal and State initiatives to reduce chronic disease, improve health outcomes, and help control healthcare costs;

Whereas healthcare professionals should treat patients with respect and compassion and should partner with patients to develop comprehensive and individualized approaches to weight loss and weight management that consider all appropriate treatment options, such as reduced-calorie diets, physical activity modifications, pharmacotherapy, and bariatric surgery;

Whereas it will take a long-term collaborative effort, which will involve individual, corporate, and institutional partners in all fields taking active roles, to ignite the betterment of obesity care and treatment; and

Whereas the week of October 29 through November 4, 2017, would be an appropriate week to designate as ''National Obesity Care Week'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of ''National Obesity Care Week''; and

(2) encourages all people in the United States to create a foundation of open communication to break barriers of misunderstanding and stigma regarding obesity and to improve the lives of all individuals affected by obesity and their families.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I have seven requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The committee will hold a subcommittee hearing on ''Stakeholder Perspectives on Improving TSA for the Security of the Traveling Public.''

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 16, 2017, in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 10:05 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 10 a.m.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Thursday, February 16, 2017, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., in room SH–219 of the Senate Hart Office Building.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 2:45 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Democracy and Human Rights: The Case for U.S. Leadership.''

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Barbara Repeta, a congressional fellow with the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, be granted floor privileges through December 31.

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Leah Rubin Shen of my staff be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this Congress.

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

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a fellow on my staff, Brian Clark, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this session.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Christy Veeder be granted floor privileges through the remainder of the year.

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

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to the following members of my staff. One is an incredible young person, Ariana Spawn: the other is a very special human being—this will be his first time ever on the Senate floor, so history for him—Zach ''Jersey Giant'' McCue.

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

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Andrew Falacci, an intern in my office, be granted floor privileges for the duration of debate on the Pruitt nomination.

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

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 16, 2017:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MICK MULVANEY, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JEREMY D. KARLIN AND ENDING WITH IRAHAM A. SANCHEZ, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 9, 2017.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF MATHEW M. LEWIS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NOTICE

Incomplete record of Senate proceedings. Today's Senate proceedings will be continued in the next issue of the Record.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Congresswoman MARCY KAPTUR of Ohio, for anchoring this Special Order and rise to remember and mourn the millions of souls lost in the Holocaust, the worst instance of man's inhumanity to man in human history.

Nearly 72 years have passed since the end of World War II but for those who survived, and the descendants and relatives of those who perished, the Holocaust is not ancient history but a reminder of the evil that can be unleased when humans give into their worst instincts and appetites.

The Holocaust's magnitude of destruction numbered more than 12 million deaths, including 6 million Jews and 1.5 million children (more than 2/3 of European Jewry), and the ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping on a society.

A haunting quote in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum refers to the story of Cain and Abel:

> The Lord said, ''What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground (Genesis 4:11).

The Holocaust forces us to confront uncomfortable questions such as the responsibilities of citizenship and the consequences of indifference and inaction, and the importance of education and awareness.

The Holocaust is a testament to the fragility of democracy.

We must resolve to resist prejudice and intolerance in any form.

It fills me with grief to know that the leaders of nations can destroy their own, as did the Nazi regime. Yet I hope that we can continue to strengthen the means by which we can pursue justice.

And I am saddened, outraged, and embarrassed that the current President of the United States could think it appropriate to issue a statement on Holocaust Remembrance Day that fails to make any mention of the defining crime of the 20th Century, the murder of 6 million persons for no reason other than they were Jews.

But the vast majority of Americans remember and are united in this prayer and promise: Never Again.

Thank you, Congresswoman KAPTUR, for holding this important special order.

I include in the RECORD the following statement from the President regarding International Holocaust Remembrance Day:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

[For Immediate Release—January 27, 2017]

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

It is with a heavy heart and somber mind that we remember and honor the victims, survivors, heroes of the Holocaust. It is impossible to fully fathom the depravity and horror inflicted on innocent people by Nazi terror.

Yet, we know that in the darkest hours of humanity, light shines the brightest. As we remember those who died, we are deeply grateful to those who risked their lives to save the innocent.

In the name of the perished, I pledge to do everything in my power throughout my Presidency, and my life, to ensure that the forces of evil never again defeat the powers of good. Together, we will make love and tolerance prevalent throughout the world.

RECOGNIZING THE PASSING OF MRS. NANNETTE ''NAN'' ANTONELLI CRAVEN OF RICHMOND, VA

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the passing of Mrs. Nannette ''Nan'' Antonelli Craven of Richmond, VA on February 5, 2017. She is survived by her children, Tony Craven (Angela), Debbie Craven Bragg (Sidney), David Craven (Kay), and Chris Craven (Heather); twelve grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Nan was known as a welcoming person to all who met her and a fiercely loving figure to all her friends and family.

She was an active member of her community, volunteering at Benedictine High School and serving as coordinator for the Night Out Against Crime at Regency Woods. She was also a longtime member of St. Paul's and St. Benedict's Church and was a current member of St. Mary's Parish. Nan's friendship, love, and sweet presence blessed all those who knew and loved her. She will be dearly missed by her family and friends.

CELEBRATING MASON DIXON HOMESCHOOLERS ASSOCIATION'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Mason Dixon Homeschoolers Association (MDHSA) on its 30th year of service to families in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

The Mason Dixon Homeschoolers Association was founded in 1986 by two families in Franklin County, Pennsylvania who wanted to homeschool their children. Martin and Mary Hudzinski, along with Barbara and Michael Sniders, were surprised to find out that families all over Pennsylvania were being denied the right to home-educate their children. They began organizing with other families who wanted to see the law changed as opposed to leaving the state to educate their children elsewhere, as some families had done. Soon, the MDHSA had seven families, and its members along with other homeschoolers in Pennsylvania worked for the passage of Act 169, signed by the governor in 1988, which allowed parents and guardians the choice of homeschooling their children.

Today, the MDHSA's membership has grown to support nearly 200 families. In 1997 they were authorized by the PA Department of Education to issue high school diplomas, and their first graduate was in 1998. Today, the MDHSA issues around 200 diplomas each year. In addition to providing their member families learning materials, they also provide their students with monthly assemblies for guest speakers to attend, classes taught by other homeschooling parents or outside experts in a particular field, field trips for its members, and even a yearly high school prom. Their graduates have become physicians, public school teachers, human rights workers, welders, and much, much more.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to congratulate the MDHSA on three decades of history and service to the Central Pennsylvania community, and to thank all who have helped this organization continue its success.

HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF TAUXEMONT COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Tauxemont Cooperative Preschool celebrating its 75th Anniversary on March 18, 2017 at its Diamond Jubilee. Tauxemont, a NAEYC accredited preschool located in the Fort Hunt corridor of Alexandria, Virginia, has been teaching preschool and kindergarten children a love of learning since 1942. The Tauxemont learning experience encourages parents to participate with their children during this major step away from home. At Tauxemont, the faculty is involved with their children both during school and at special events. Family involvement is what makes a child's experience at Tauxemont unique.

Tauxemont's primary purpose is to provide an environment for a child to grow emotionally, developmentally, physically, socially, and intellectually.

Tauxemont, therefore, allows them to: discover that school is a happy place, that learning is fun and rewarding and that teachers are understanding and stimulating human beings; learn how to work and play successfully with other children; learn to develop their own skills, talents, and interests, and to expand each of these to the fullest extent; develop a sense of personal worth and an understanding of the needs and rights of others; and to develop a sense of excitement and interest in

the world in which we live and an eagerness to learn more.

Tauxemont prepares children for formal schooling and ready to learn anything.

The secret behind Tauxemont's success for over 60 years is parent involvement. Parents participate in all aspects of the school, contributing to the success of children.

HONORING RETIRING WESTERN SPRINGS CHIEF OF POLICE PAMELA CHURCH

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Western Springs Chief of Police Pamela Church, who is retiring after 33 years of service in law enforcement.

Chief Church started out as physical education teacher in the Decatur School District. After seven years in education, she decided to switch careers and become a police officer in 1983. She started as a patrol officer for the Downers Grove Police Department where she developed an award-winning community oriented policing program. Chief Church spent more than 20 years serving and protecting the Downers Grove community and rose through the ranks to Deputy Chief.

In November 2005, Chief Church was hired as Chief of Police for the Western Springs Police Department. Upon becoming Chief, she became one of seven female police chiefs in the State of Illinois. Chief Church honorably protected the Western Springs community for over a decade.

In addition, Chief Church has been recognized by a variety of organizations for her exemplary efforts as Police Chief. In 2010, Church became the 50th president and first female president of the West Suburban Chiefs of Police Association, an honorable testament to her work outside of Western Springs and her dedication to law enforcement. She was also given the Illinois State Bar Association Law Enforcement Award in 2009, among countless other awards honoring her commitment to her community. Thanks to her work as Chief, she has made Western Springs a better and safer community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Chief of Police Pamela Church for all she has done in her years of service to her community and to congratulate her on her retirement. Her contributions have made an important impact in Western Springs and she will surely be missed.

HONORING SARA O'DONNELL

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Sara O'Donnell, founder and Executive Director of the Cancer Resource Center of Mendocino County, who is retiring after 21 years of service.

Sara O'Donnell grew up in rural central California, where she worked in the agricultural fields as a teenager and suffered the effects of exposure to pesticides. In 1990, after surviving a personal battle with breast cancer, Ms. O'Donnell set about establishing a resource to help individuals diagnosed with cancer. Five years later, in 1995, she and the founding board of directors opened the Cancer Resource Center of Mendocino County.

Over the following twenty years, the Cancer Resource Center has grown to serve more than 360 people annually. And, under Ms. O'Donnell's leadership, the Center has received grants and funding from the California Endowment, Avon Foundation, and hundreds of local community members.

Ms. O'Donnell's work has not only positively impacted the lives of countless individuals across Mendocino County, but she has shared her research and publications to provide assistance to underserved rural patients across the nation. Her volunteer service extends beyond the Cancer Resource Center. She is an advisory board member for Mendocino County Public Health and Mendocino County Health Insurance for All; she is on the board of directors for the Mendocino Coast Clinics; and she is an associate member of the Alliance for Rural Community Health.

Sara O'Donnell's legacy is one of dedicated service to rural health care and cancer prevention, and it is appropriate to express to her our deep appreciation for her long and exceptional career and her outstanding volunteer service, and to wish her well on her retirement.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF MR. GREG FARMER

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. WITTMAN . Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Mr. Greg Farmer, President and CEO of Colonial Farm Credit of Mechanicsville, Virginia.

Greg Farmer has been involved in agriculture for almost his entire life. From his education at the University of Maryland School of Agriculture to his first job in the poultry industry to his career at financial cooperative Farm Credit, he has worked tirelessly on behalf of farmers and their rural communities.

Mr. Farmer's lasting legacy and greatest impact has been his work at Colonial Farm Credit. He began his career as a loan officer in Farmville, Virginia working with poultry, tobacco, dairy, and cattle farmers during agriculture's difficult times in the 1980s. His efforts kept a lot of farmers in the field and working. These early experiences shaped his determination that the best way for Farm Credit to serve the community was to maintain strong credit standards in order to have the ability to be a steady resource for farmers in both good and bad times.

As Chief Credit Officer, he laid the groundwork to mold Colonial Farm Credit into the cooperative it is today. Respected and admired for his ability to understand credit policy and apply it correctly, he set the standard by which loan officers make and underwrite loans today.

This straightforward approach served him well when he was chosen by the board of directors to be President and CEO in 2000. Since that time, the cooperative has grown in loan volume, become a standard in the industry for its excellent performance, and has become the lender of choice for farmers and foresters in eastern Virginia and southern Maryland.

In addition to leading a $665 million lending institution employing 76 people, Greg has also found time to be an integral part of the community. He serves on both the board of Agriculture in the Classroom and as a consultant to the Colonial Agricultural Educational Foundation. He is a participant in many agricultural events and has been an active voice on Capitol Hill meeting Members of Congress as an advocate for the interests of the rural and agricultural communities.

Mr. Farmer is widely known as a man of great integrity, intelligence, and common sense and can be relied on to analyze problems and give a reasoned and researched response. He is also a great representative not only for Farm Credit, but for cooperatives and agriculture in general. He loves telling the cooperative story and also bragging about hard working farmers and their vital role in America.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize and congratulate Mr. Farmer on his distinguished career and I wish him all the best in this next chapter of life.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ARIZONA

HON. ANDY BIGGS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, this week, my home state of Arizona turned 105 years old. The Grand Canyon State is an incredible state in which to raise a family and earn a living.

There is so much to love about Arizona. We have over 300 days of sunshine; we enjoy the cool pines of Flagstaff and the rustic and historic towns of Prescott, Show Low, and Tombstone, which give perspective into Arizona's first days as a state; and we greatly benefit from the agriculture city Yuma.

Arizona's lakes, mountains, and skies provide countless activities throughout the year for natives and visitors alike. Arizona also enthusiastically hosts 15 Major League Baseball teams for Spring Training, Super Bowls, College Football playoff games, and the Waste Management Open, which many call the Greatest Show on Grass.

Most of all, I love the people of Arizona. Arizonans are diverse, patriotic, and fiercely independent. They bring so much talent and potential to our communities. I am deeply honored to serve my constituents in Chandler, Gilbert, Mesa, Sun Lakes, and Queen Creek.

After a long week in Washington, I cannot wait to step off the plane into the fresh, free air of Arizona. It is the greatest state in the union, and I will always be proud to called Arizona my home.

Happy Birthday, State 48.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF GRADUATING SENIOR BUFFALO STATE BENGALS MENS BASKETBALL PLAYERS, NICO McLEAN, JORDAN GLOVER, LEON MOISE, JORDAN CHATEAU AND LOVELL SMITH

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize five exceptional members of the senior class at Buffalo State College, Nico McLean, Jordan Glover, Leon Moise, Jordan Chateau and Lovell Smith. During their collegiate careers, these young men have proven to be talented and dedicated scholars and athletes. Their achievements on and off the court are worthy of praise and I congratulate them on the completion of their undergraduate degrees.

As members of the Buffalo State men's basketball team, these students are known as leaders among their peers and teammates. I commend these young men for their dedication to academics and athletics and congratulate them as their college careers come to a close.

Buffalo native and graduate from Amherst High School, Nico McLean plays Guard for Buffalo State. The senior currently majors in Computer Information's Systems.

Jordan Glover, a Buffalo native and graduate of St. Josephs Collegiate Institute majors in Communications. The senior plays Guard for Buffalo State and leads the team in steals.

Leon Moise, a Brooklyn native and graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School plays Forward at Buffalo State. The senior is currently studying Biology.

Bayside, New York native and graduate of Lowell High School, senior Jordan Chateau plays either Forward or Center for Buffalo State. Outside of basketball, he is majoring in Criminal Justice.

Lovell Smith, a senior Guard from Buffalo, New York, leads the team in games started. A graduate of McKinley High School, Smith is studying electrical engineering.

Balancing the responsibilities demanded of student athletes is a true challenge, and each of these students handled the test with dignity and grace. As an alumnus of Buffalo State, I will be proud to call them fellow alumni.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing my colleagues to join me in recognizing these extraordinary Buffalo State Bengals and in congratulating them as they obtain their undergraduate degrees. Their dedication and drive will propel them to success, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

CELEBRATING THE MILITARY SERVICE OF ROBERT LUKENBAUGH

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a great man for his military service, Robert Lukenbaugh. Mr. Lukenbaugh is a 92-year-old veteran of both World War II and the Korean War. After graduating high school in 1943, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps.

After basic training in San Diego, he shipped out to the Pacific Theatre on a transport ship stopping at Pearl Harbor before heading to Midway. He later returned to the Naval Hospital at Pearl Harbor to receive treatment for a broken leg. He left active duty in the Marines in 1946, but remained in the Reserves. He married his wife, the former Mary Etta that same year. In 1950, he was called back into the Marines to train troops going to Korea at Camp Pendleton. Mr. Lukenbaugh was honorably discharged in 1951 from the Marines and moved back to Oklahoma with his wife.

Mr. Lukenbaugh worked for Union Equity Cooperative Exchange for 50 years, 15 of which were in Oklahoma. In 1965, he and his wife moved to Deer Park, Texas where he continued working for Union Equity Cooperative Exchange for 35 more years. After retiring, the couple remained in Deer Park where they attend Deer Park United Methodist Church.

It is a tremendous honor to represent Mr. Lukenbaugh in the U.S. Congress and I thank him for his selfless military service to this great nation.

A TRIBUTE TO TIM ALBRECHT

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Tim Albrecht for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

Tim is known for his solid reputation, strong work ethic and positive attitude. After years of honing his craft on numerous political campaigns, and four years serving as Communications Director to Governor Terry Branstad, Tim set out on his own in 2016 to establish Albrecht Public Relations. Additionally, Tim is a partner and co-founder of the bipartisan polling firm RABA Research. Tim lives in West Des Moines with his wife Josie, 31/2-year-old son Davis, and baby daughter Avery.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Tim in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Tim on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

HONORING CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER JILL SILVA

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Stanislaus County Chief Probation Officer, Jill Silva, who has announced her retirement after more than 27 years of service.

Chief Silva graduated from California State University, Fresno in 1986 with a Degree in Social Work. After graduation, she began her career as a Probation Aid with Fresno County Probation Department, served as a Mental Health Worker with Kings View Behavioral Health Systems, and then came to work with Stanislaus County in Adult Protective Services.

In April of 1989, Chief Silva started her career with Stanislaus County Probation Department as a Deputy Probation Officer assigned to the Juvenile Intake and Investigation Unit. She also worked with the Adult Supervision and the Juvenile Supervision Unit.

In 1996, she was promoted to Deputy Probation Officer III, as well as continuing to work with the Juvenile Intake Unit. She was then promoted to Supervising Probation Officer in 1999 and was assigned to the Juvenile Division's Community Partnerships Unit.

Chief Silva's excellent work ethic in public service was noticed as she continued to receive multiple promotions. In 2001, she was promoted to Manager III and then received another promotion in November of 2002 to Chief Deputy Probation Officer. In June 2007, she transferred to the Institutional Services Division and her position was reclassified as the Assistant Chief Probation in 2009.

Throughout her career, Chief Silva has served on various committees, including the Stanislaus County Children's Council, Stanislaus County Child Abuse Prevention Council, and the Stanislaus County Methamphetamine Task Force. She is also a member of the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association (CPPCA), California Association of Probation Services Administrators (CAPSA), California Association of Probation Institution Administrators (CAPIA), and the Stanislaus County Peace Officers Association.

Chief Silva assumed the role of Acting Chief Probation Officer in December 2011, and on May 5, 2012, she was appointed Chief Probation Officer of the Stanislaus County Probation Department.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and commending the outstanding contributions made to Stanislaus County by Chief Jill Silva as we wish her continued success in her retirement.

HONORING SHERIFF JAMES L. KNIGHT ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my longtime friend and constituent, Sheriff James L. Knight as he retires at the end of February after serving 20 years as the top law enforcement officer for Edgecombe County, North Carolina and more than 33 years in law enforcement. Sheriff Knight is the first African American to serve in this position in Edgecombe County.

James L. Knight was born on July 19, 1959 in the Town of Macclesfield and is the youngest of nine children born to Annie Mae and Willie W. Knight. He attended Living Hope Elementary School in Macclesfield and South Edgecombe High School in Pinetops where he graduated in 1977.

After graduation, Mr. Knight enlisted in the United States Army and served as part of the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was a model soldier and was awarded the Parachute Badge, Expert Badge M–16, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and two letters of commendation. He was Honorably Discharged in 1980 having earned the rank of Specialist E–4.

Sheriff Knight began his law enforcement career with the Edgecombe County Sheriff's Office in July 1984 as a Detention Officer. He rose through the ranks serving first as Deputy Sheriff and later as Detective, where he remained until he was appointed Sheriff of Edgecombe County by the Edgecombe County Democratic Party Executive Committee in 1997, when then-Sheriff Phil Ellis resigned from the position. Sheriff Knight has faithfully served the people of Edgecombe County as Sheriff for the last 20 years and has been reelected to this office every four years since being appointed.

Sheriff Knight manages more than 100 employees, including over fifty certified officers. Under Sheriff Knight's direction, these officers cover over 526 square miles and are charged with protecting nearly 60,000 Edgecombe County residents.

A dedicated public servant, Sheriff Knight implemented the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program within Edgecombe County Schools. D.A.R.E. is an officer-led series of classroom lessons that teaches fifth graders how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives. There is no doubt that Sheriff Knight had a profound and positive impact on an entire generation of young people. His positive influence continues today.

Sheriff Knight has always been known as a true public servant who is always eager and willing to serve. His long held goal has been to provide effective and efficient law enforcement service while building strong and trusting relationships with the citizens. He has certainly achieved that goal and so much more.

Sheriff Knight's dedication to and impact in Edgecombe County is seen far beyond the walls of the Sheriff's Department. He has been a strong catalyst in improving and positively impacting the lives of Edgecombe County citizens. In recognition of his selfless work, Sheriff Knight has received numerous awards including the Citizen of the Year, James B. Hunt, Jr. Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Volunteer Services, and a Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Law Enforcement.

Sheriff Knight has served and continues to serve on several boards including the United Way, Boy Scouts of America, Governor's Crime Commission, National Sheriffs' Association, North State Law Enforcement Officers Association, and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association where he served as the President of the executive committee. He even proudly represented his community as an Olympic Torch Bearer in the lead up to the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia.

At every step along his storied life, Sheriff James L. Knight has been accompanied by his wife, the former Margaret Sharpe. The two were married on August 1, 1982. Together, they have two children, James Jr. and Jamina, and one grandson Jayden. They attend Anderson Chapel Baptist Church in Macclesfield where Sheriff Knight serves on the Board of Deacons.

Mr. Speaker, Sheriff James L. Knight has dedicated his entire adult life to public service. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the dedication and selflessness displayed by Sheriff Knight over more than 30 years first as a soldier, then as a Corrections Officer, Deputy Sheriff, Detective, and finally as Sheriff of Edgecombe County. While Sheriff Knight is deserving of far greater accolades from a grateful public, my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in expressing our sincere appreciation for Sheriff Knight's hard work and sacrifice.

A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM SCALES

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate William Scales for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

William is a member attorney at Whitfield & Eddy Law Firm in Des Moines, tirelessly advocating for his clients and passionate about making Des Moines a better community. Outside of his law practice, William is an Associate Fellow in the Litigation Counsel of America, and has been active with the Greater Des Moines Partnership's Youth Leadership Initiative and several other community-centered organizations. William served in the U.S. Army as an Air Defense Officer from 2004–2008, and this year will be marrying the love of his life, Erica.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like William in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating William on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

IN HONOR OF HENRY L. ''HANK'' AARON

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to rise today to recognize a legendary baseball player, great philanthropist, and outstanding citizen, Henry L. ''Hank'' Aaron. Hank and his wife, Billye, will be honored by the Mobile Area Mardi Gras Association (MAMGA) in Mobile, Alabama on February 26–27, 2017.

Henry Louis Aaron was born in Mobile, Alabama, on February 5, 1934, the third of eight children born to Herbert and Estella Aaron. Hank was interested in sports from an early age. Although he worked several jobs to help support his family, he spent a lot of time playing baseball at a neighborhood park. He transferred to the Allen Institute in Mobile his junior year of high school to participate in the school's organized baseball program.

After graduating from high school, Hank began to make a name for himself playing with local amateur and semi-pro teams, including the Pritchett Athletics and the Mobile Black Bears. In 1951, Hank was signed as a shortstop for the Indianapolis Clowns, which was part of the professional Negro American League. In 1952, the Boston Braves purchased his contract and he was assigned to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Hank batted .336 and won the minor Northern League's Rookie of the Year Award. He was then assigned to the Braves' Jacksonville, Florida team, in the South Atlantic (Sally) League. Despite enduring racial insults from fans and fellow players alike, Hank batted .362, with 22 homers and 125 runs batted in. He was named the league's Most Valuable Player in 1953.

In 1954, Hank began to play for the Braves' major league team. After the 1965 season, the Braves moved to Atlanta, where on April 8, 1974, Hank hit his 715th career home run, breaking Babe Ruth's 39-year-old Major League record. By the time he retired in 1976, Hank had raised his all-time homer output to 755. But although Hank had retired from baseball, baseball had not retired from him. He became Vice President and Director of Player Development for the Braves, scouting new team prospects and overseeing the coaching of minor leaguers, before becoming Senior Vice President for the team. Due to his efforts, the Braves became one of the strongest teams in the National League.

While many people know of Hank Aaron because of his accomplishments in baseball, it is

Hank's philanthropy that truly sets him apart. In 1995, Hank and Billye established the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation to give young people with limited opportunities a chance to pursue their dreams. While Hank had initially envisioned helping 755 youngsters, the Foundation has provided vital financial assistance to more than 1,000 young people. The Foundation provides scholarships to college students and partners with Boys and Girls Clubs throughout the country to help young people develop their talents.

Hank has received numerous awards and tributes for both his athletic ability and his charitable efforts. In 1982, he was voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, New York. In 1997, Hank Aaron Stadium in Mobile was dedicated to him. In 1999, Congress passed a resolution recognizing him as one of baseball's greatest players and praising his work with the Chasing the Dream Foundation. That year, Major League Baseball announced the creation of the Hank Aaron Award, given annually to the best overall hitter in each league. In 2002, Hank received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award of the United States.

On a personal note, I am proud to consider Hank and the Aaron family friends of longstanding. He and I grew up in the same area of Mobile, Toulminville, and his sister, Alfredia, was my classmate from elementary school through Central High School Class of 1964. She and her husband, Congressman DAVID SCOTT, continue to be dear friends to my wife and me.

Indeed, Hank is a baseball legend but he is also an entrepreneur, civil rights leader, philanthropist, humanitarian and just an outstanding human being, period. His humility is unparalleled and his heart for helping others has made a tremendous impact throughout our nation and the world. He continues to make Mobilians proud.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me and my wife, Vivian, in recognizing the perseverance, generosity, and legacy of Hank and Billye Aaron. Winston Churchill said: "You make your living by what you get, you make a life by what you give." The Aarons embody this ideal perfectly and their spirit of giving is making lives for generations yet to come.

A CONSTITUENT'S VIEW ON THE STATE OF OUR NATION

HON. DARIN LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of my constituent, Ed Rapp, from Peoria, Illinois. Mr. Rapp recently retired as a top executive and group president from Caterpillar Inc. after thirty-six years of tremendous and admirable service to the company and the Peoria community. He was recently diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease and turned his focus to raising awareness and supporting those in search of a cure. The following is an open letter Mr. Rapp penned to his grandson:

AN APOLOGY TO MY GRANDSON COLE

On the heels of a frustrating election, the combination of reading ''Hamilton'' and seeing the Chicago Cubs win the World Series, I'm compelled to put my thoughts down in writing taking the form of an apology to my grandson, and the next generation of Americans. ''Hamilton'' reminded me of the combination of leadership and compromise demonstrated by our Founding Fathers. And the Cubs showed us that, against the odds of history, if you improve competitiveness, you can compete and win. (And let the record show that I—a die-hard St. Louis Cardinals fan—can appreciate that feat!)

Fortunately, what was the most disappointing election process in my history is behind us. My words are not aimed at one party or the other as I am equally frustrated by both sides. Our leaders spend too much time trying to defeat the opposing party instead of focusing on how to make sure that America competes and wins.

At 59 years old, my generation inherited the most competitive country in the world, and that competitiveness led to the highest standard of living in the world. We seem to have overlooked the direct correlation between a country's competitiveness and the standard of living of its citizens.

The Cubs championship team stands as a first class example of how changing the way you compete can change your results. If you want to improve your competitiveness, you adapt. New leadership made great draft choices that complemented wily veterans, ending more than a century of losing.

The same opportunities are afforded to this great nation (yes, it should be noted I remain optimistic about this country's future). However, what lies ahead won't be easy. It will require strong leaders like Hamilton, compromise by both parties and an understanding that it is all about competitiveness.

Like it or not, our infrastructure is in a state of disrepair and we have not addressed its long term funding in more than 20 years. The build-out of our US highway system in the 1960s ignited one of the greatest economic booms in history. But we haven't reinvested. The road to progress still begins with a road, period.

We have gone from having one of the most competitive corporate tax rates in 1986 to being the laggard amongst OECD countries. While the rest of the world has gone to a territorial system, we are still living in the past with our worldwide system. With a corporate tax rate 56 percent higher than the average of other OECD countries, is it any wonder companies want to locate in other parts of the world?

We also seem to have forgotten that our country was built by immigrants. We must remain a nation where the world's best and brightest come to innovate and create new businesses. We can't continue to provide world-class college education to young minds from around the world, and then tell them to pack their bags.

The political debate criticized global trade. Have we forgotten the U.S. is only five percent of the world's population and, for decades, led by example on free trade, which improves the standard of living of Americans and our trading partners? We need to move forward and trade is fundamental to growth. If countries turn nationalistic, we won't like the long term outcome (Brexit and backing out of the Trans Pacific Partnership really concern me).

I would offer my generation has made no meaningful progress on some of the core elements of competitiveness in decades (no major corporate tax or immigration reform since mid-1980s, no change on infrastructure funding since 1993, no major global trade deal since 1994) and, as illustrated above, the cost will be significant: a lower standard of living for the next generation. For this, I say to my grandson, I am sorry.

But, as emphasized up front, I remain optimistic. I really do hope and pray for the next generation that Congress and the President work together to take on the challenges at hand. Be brave and compromise like Alexander Hamilton. Improve competitiveness like the Cubs. And, as we go about ''Making America Great Again,'' let's just remember what made her great in the first place.

A TRIBUTE TO LARRY ANDERSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Larry Anderson for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

Larry is a Business Development Officer with Central Bank. He is co-founder of the non-profit organization, Art for Ankeny, dedicated to installing public art across Ankeny. In addition, Larry serves on multiple boards for the City of Ankeny and is active on Grand View University's Business Advisory Board. Larry has been recognized for his exemplary dedication to the welfare of the Ankeny community with awards from Ankeny Young Professionals, the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce, and by being named a finalist for the Young Professional of the Year Impact Award.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Larry in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Larry on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

HONORING NEW JERSEY HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE TOMMY JAMES

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Cedar Grove resident and recent New Jersey Hall of Fame inductee, Tommy James. Mr. James is a pop-rock musician, singer, songwriter, record producer and is one of the fifteen new inductees to the New Jersey Hall of Fame.

America in the 1960s was a time of significant cultural and musical development. From Tommy James to the Beatles, Bob Dylan,

Joan Baez, Jimi Hendrix, and a young New Jerseyan named Bruce Springsteen receiving his first guitar from his mother in 1964, the artists from the 1960s shaped the music landscape forever.

In the 1960s, a young, outspoken and politically active generation often told their stories through music and art. As a young person during this era, I can attest to the importance of the messages conveyed by musicians about contemporary society and their unwavering belief in building a better America for future generations.

The State of New Jersey can bestow no higher honor on one of our citizens than induction into our Hall of Fame and I congratulate Tommy James, who helped to influence generations of musicians.

Mr. Speaker, with an award-winning music career spanning over three decades and countless contributions to our State and its citizens, I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Tommy James to his induction to the New Jersey Hall of Fame.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FAIRNESS FOR BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS ACT OF 2017

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act of 2017, a bill that would require buildings that are either federally owned or leased to provide designated private and hygienic lactation spaces for nursing mothers. The bill was included in the Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act of 2016, which passed the House last Congress. For years, federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have encouraged breastfeeding. The benefits are so great that federal law now requires employers to provide a designated, non-bathroom space for employees to pump breastmilk for their newborns, ensuring that new mothers would be able to continue this essential practice even after returning to work. My bill would extend this requirement to include not just employees, but visitors and guests to federal facilities across the nation.

In Washington, D.C. alone, millions of tourists visit federal sites, such as the Lincoln Memorial. Increasingly, families understand the unique benefits of breastfeeding, and visitors to these buildings who have newborns and babies should have a private space to breastfeed or pump. The benefits of breastfeeding are well-documented. Breastmilk contains antibodies and hormones that boost babies' immune systems, and studies have shown lower risks of asthma, diabetes, respiratory infections and other diseases among breastfed babies. Moreover, breastfeeding also has benefits for nursing mothers, who, research has shown, have lower risks of diabetes and certain forms of cancer. Given the significant public health benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby, already recognized in federal policy, my bill is a logical next step to ensure visitors to federal sites have access to clean, hygienic, and private spaces to nurse or pump.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, which would provide access to designated lactation rooms for guests to federally owned or leased buildings.

OPPOSITION TO H.J. RES. 43 AND H.J. RES. 69

HON. KAREN BASS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, in order to attend a previously scheduled event I had to return to California; however, if I had been present today, I would have continued to voice my strenuous objects to the use of the Congressional Review Act to invalidate a seemingly endless number of agency rules. Today, I would express my opposition to and voted against H.J. Res. 43 and H.J. Res. 69. Use of the Congressional Review Act in the month of February to eliminate agency regulations thereby barring their return in substantially the same form as in some instances negated years of work on the part of agency officials, stakeholders, advocates, and the public. H.J. Res. 43 represents another vehicle to prevent families from having legitimate access in every state to the Title X program, which has been in effect for over 40 years.

Title X of the Public Health Services Act is the only dedicated source of federal funding for family planning. It provides grants to both nonprofit and public entities that, in turn, provide a wide range of both preventative and family planning services. These clinics have provided service to over 4 million men, women and children. The services include preconception health services, contraceptive care as well as breast and cervical cancer screenings and prevention. H.J. Res. 43 would prevent the implementation of a final rule by the Department of Health and Human Services that would have ensured that these patients continued to have access to all qualified Title X providers.

At a time when there has been a call to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which will result in 20 million Americans losing insurance, and negatively impact the benefits currently received by those with insurance and no viable replacement option being put forward. Our efforts should be spent addressing this issue. Instead, we are voting on a measure that will only serve to decrease access to health services that impact the long term health needs of families.

As for H.J. Res. 69, it represents yet another effort to use the Congressional Review Act to undermine the efforts of stakeholders, advocates, and agencies to address an issue. The promulgation of the rule by the Fish and Wild Life Services addresses Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures. In effect the rule is designed to limit state sponsored and recreational killing of species like grizzly bears and gray wolves unless there is full compliance with existing federal law as well as compliance with the purposes of the refuge. At this time those who have opposed this rule have not provided a scientific bases or sound science as a basis for opposing the final rule issued by the Department of the Interior.

For these reasons and more, I would have opposed H.J. Res. 43 and H.J. Res. 69.

HONORING HAL D. PAYNE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate and honor Mr. Hal D. Payne who is retiring from Buffalo State College after 27 years of service. He will be missed by all at Buffalo State and his years of work will not be forgotten, nor will his tireless commitment to broadening and enhancing the educational opportunities of Western New York.

Mr. Payne joined Buffalo State College in 1990 when he began to work as the assistant Vice President of Student Affairs. After a year he was promoted to Vice President. Under Mr. Payne's leadership, Buffalo State College has upgraded many of their student facilities such as the Frank C. Moore Apartment Complex, the Student Apartment Complex, Cassety Halls, and the Towers as well as the renovation of Houston Gymnasium.

In the summer of 2000, Mr. Payne completed the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' Millennium Leadership Initiative, this program provides leadership development and allows individuals the chance to develop skills and build an advanced network. This program has aided Mr. Payne's work of advancing Buffalo State's connections within and outside of the state of New York.

Before coming to Buffalo State, Mr. Payne served as Senior Associate for the Council for opportunity in Education in Washington, D.C. and as the Chief of Staff to U.S. Representative Louis Stokes of Ohio. He currently acts as a consultant to the U.S. Department of Education, expanding his range of work to support education across America. His commitment to his work was recognized in 2010 by Governor David A. Patterson to the New York State Council on the Arts. Hal Payne's education at Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University, and at the Institution for Educational Management at Harvard University, has edified his knowledge and passion for advancing education.

Mr. Payne is the recipient of numerous awards which attest to the fact that his work has not gone unappreciated or unnoticed. Hal Payne earned the Oberlin Medal, which is the highest individual honor that is awarded by Oberlin College. In addition to the Oberlin Medal, Mr. Payne received the Walter O. Mason Jr. Award from the Council for Opportunity in Education. This national award is presented to those who exhibit distinguished service and leadership.

Outside of his work at Buffalo State College, Mr. Hal Payne has done a great deal of work for the greater Buffalo area. He currently participates in many organizations including the Buffalo Club, the leadership Buffalo Class of 1995, and is an active member of the Board of the Arts Services Initiative of Western New York. His passionate work within Western New York will be remembered for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the chance to honor and recognize the legacy of Hal D. Payne's years of invaluable work. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Mr. Payne on an accomplished career and to commend him for his 27 years of committed work at Buffalo State College.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOE WILLIAMS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Joe Williams, who passed away on February 8, 2017 at the age of 79. Joe was a loving husband, father and grandfather, who dedicated much of his life to public service. He was a leader in the community, eventually becoming the first African-American elected to the Fresno City Council in 1977. Joe was a friend to many, a mentor, and trailblazer. His presence in the community will truly be missed.

Joe Williams was born on May 8, 1937 in Biloxi, Mississippi to Brooke Lee Starks and Charlie Williams. At the age of nine, his parents, along with Joe, his brother, George, and his sister, Audrey, moved to Fresno, California. He attended Edison High School and enlisted in the United States Army upon graduation in 1956. After his service, Joe enrolled in Fresno City College. He would go on to earn a scholarship to play football at Fresno State, where he graduated with his Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Welfare.

After graduating, Joe began his career with the Fresno County Welfare Department. In 1968, he went to work for the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC), as the Director of the Fresno County Head Start Commission, where he would go on to work for 26 years. After two years, Joe was named Executive Director of Fresno EOC. He was the longest tenured Executive Director, serving in that role from 1970 to 1993. During his tenure, Fresno EOC expanded its budget from $1.8 million to $37 million, with 35 programs to provide services to 130,00 low income families annually. With the help of over 670 staff members, Fresno EOC was able to implement many programs including Palm Village family homeless shelter, open the first rural health clinic in Fresno County, and start a Meals on Wheels program for seniors. A sanctuary program for homeless youth was also established and named in his honor upon Joe's retirement. Under his leadership, Fresno EOC became a model for similar programs across the nation.

In 1977, Joe was elected to the Fresno City Council, making him the first African American elected to the council. He served two terms between 1977 and 1985. Joe was voted as Mayor Pro-Tem from 1984–1985.

In 1994, Joe joined Richard Heath and Associates, a privately owned company that aims to provide energy efficiency programs for underserved communities, serving as the CEO until 2005 and serving as board president through 2016. Along with his lifelong friends James Hendricks and Dr. James Aldredge, Joe formed HAW-Fifty Six, which provides services and housing in West Fresno. HAW-Fifty Six developed the Edison HAW Plaza and the first phase of a multi-family apartment complex in West Fresno, in collaboration with the Fresno Housing Authority. Joe volunteered his time, serving on numerous boards, including Community Medical Center Board of Trustees, California State University, Fresno Foundation Board and the Fresno Chamber of Commerce.

Joe is survived by his wife of 40 years Laura, their children Michael and his wife Sonya, Winston, and Terri, his brother George, his grandchildren, great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the life and service of Joe Williams. He will be remembered for the selfless way in which he lived his life, always looking to help those in the community who were in need. I join his family in honoring his life, love for his community, and service to his country. He will be greatly missed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EQUALITY FOR ALL RESOLUTION

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, as Americans, we pride ourselves on being the most free and open society the world has ever known. Yet, for far too long, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans have been forced to live in the shadows because of who they are. Year after year, we see attacks on the LGBT community as governments at all levels look to institutionalize discrimination in the name of religious freedom. In 2015, we witnessed my home state of Indiana enact the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, giving businesses the right to refuse service based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

It is clear that the vast majority of Americans oppose this type of discrimination. After Indiana's law passed, the public and the business community came together to express outrage and successfully overturned Indiana's discriminatory law. However, we are still in need of a federal law to affirm the rights of all individuals to be protected from discrimination. That is why I am introducing the Equality for All Resolution to encourage Congress to take actions that ensure all Americans, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, know they are valued members of our society. From housing to employment to education, they deserve to live their lives like any other American, free from intolerance because of who they are.

A TRIBUTE TO AZURE CHRISTENSEN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Azure Christensen for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

Azure is the Foundation Executive Director for HCI Care Services and Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa. In her 15–year career in non-profit development, she has helped raise over $50 million for organizations in Central Iowa. The many causes she has worked hard to benefit include: creating opportunities for young children with cancer so that they can lead normal lives during difficult treatments, ensuring women have access to affordable healthcare, and providing easy access to quality higher education. Azure lives in Johnston with her husband, Zach, and her two young boys, Maddox and Grady.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Azure in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Azure on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

RECOGNIZING MS. ANDREA BROWN AS THE 2016–2017 OKALOOSA COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. MATT GAETZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Ms. Andrea Brown as the 2016–2017 Okaloosa County Teacher of the Year. For 18 years, Ms. Brown has served the Okaloosa County School District with exceptional passion and an unwavering commitment to serving others.

In Northwest Florida, we are fortunate to have some of the best teachers in the Nation. It is recognized that the teaching profession is one of the most difficult yet rewarding professions in existence. Ms. Brown has exceptionally performed her teaching duties, while also striving to be an active and supportive member of her team at Baker School.

Most recently, Ms. Brown has served as a Title One Remediation Teacher for both math and reading. Through her work, she has helped countless students improve their reading and writing skills. The effects of her guidance and instruction will continue to have a profoundly positive impact on her students for many years.

Her support and outreach extends beyond the classroom as well, through her service on the Homecoming Committee, involvement with the Aspire after school program, and with Okaloosa Online. Ms. Brown has displayed remarkable compassion and devotion by spending time outside the classroom helping others. I commend her for her steadfast willingness to serve those that matter most, the students and youth of our Nation.

For all of her admirable contributions, I am truly proud to have Ms. Brown as a constituent in Florida's First Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Ms.

Andrea Brown for her accomplishments and her commitment to excellence in the Okaloosa County School District. I thank her for her service and wish her all the best for continued success.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES ''DEEDLE'' WALKER

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Charles ''Deedle'' Walker who will be turning 90 years old on March 4, 2017. Deedle Walker was born in East Tennessee in 1927.

He helped operate his older brother's gas station when the United States was at war during WWII.

He once entered a free throw contest shooting under-handed and managed to finish second after sinking 24 out of 25 free throws.

After graduating from Carter High School, he was offered a basketball/football scholarship at the University of Alabama. Unfortunately, he became ill from spinal meningitis and did not go there. However, he was lucky to later attend Carson-Newman College.

He hitchhiked to college daily to attend class and starred in basketball and baseball under the tutelage of legendary Coach Frosty Holt. He also signed a minor league contract with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

More importantly he met his future wife, Martha Dale Kitts, of Knoxville, Tennessee while at Carson-Newman.

While attending a friend's wedding, in which Martha was a bridesmaid, in Washington, D.C., Martha and Deedle became engaged. They were married later that day at the Capitol Hill Baptist Church on August 5, 1950.

Martha Walker later taught English and was the librarian at Carter High School where Deedle attended. Deedle enjoyed a 40-year career with the telephone company Southern Bell and its successors, and he was also a longtime basketball referee in the Knoxville area.

Deedle is an early riser and a hard-working man. In fact, he still greets anyone who sleeps past 8 a.m. on a Saturday morning with ''Good afternoon.''

Martha and Deedle had five children: Mark, Laura, Christopher (died in infancy), Joel and Don. They now have eight grandchildren and five greatgrandchildren, with another one on the way.

I hope everyone will join me on March 4th in wishing Deedle Walker a Happy 90th Birthday.

CELEBRATING THE MILITARY SERVICE OF RAYMOND HOLUB

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a great man for his military service, Mr. Raymond Holub. Mr. Holub is a 92 year old veteran of both World War II and the Korean War. Born in Pleak, Texas, Mr. Holub spent his teenage years working with the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Mr. Holub bravely volunteered to become a Paratrooper and served in the 17th and 82nd Airborne Divisions during World War II from 1943 to 1946. His ship was involved in an accident at sea and hundreds of lives were lost. After overcoming the dangers of the Atlantic, he and his fellow soldiers reached Germany. Upon reaching Essen and Berlin, Holub was reassigned to General Dwight D. Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force, as an Honor Guard. Mr. Holub left the Army in 1946, only to reenlist and serve his country a second time, in the Korean War from 1950 to 1951. He received the Bronze Star for his military service.

He has been a resident of Liberty, Texas for 56 years. Mr. Holub remains an active member of the American Legion Post 658 in Crosby, Texas and VFW Post 912 in Baytown, Texas.

It is a tremendous honor to represent Mr. Holub in the U.S. Congress and I thank him for his selfless military service to this great nation.

A TRIBUTE TO TRINA FLACK

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Trina Flack for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

Trina is a National Sales Manager at the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau, where she is responsible for attracting meetings and events to the Des Moines area. She finds herself busy outside of work with her involvement in many city, planning, cultural and leadership organizations. An Iowa State alumna and avid Cyclone football and basketball fan, Trina lives in Ankeny with her husband Adam, and their three children, Natalie, Tyler, and Emma.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Trina in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Trina on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE KING

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, due to traffic delay surrounding a Vice President Motorcade, I missed two votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 95 and Yea on Roll Call No. 96.

IN HONOR OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL HAL MOORE

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the most courageous and distinctive military leaders of our time, Lieutenant General Harold ''Hal'' G. Moore, the commander at the Battle of la Drang in the Vietnam War in 1965. Sadly, LTG Moore passed away on Friday, February 10, 2017. A funeral mass will be held on Friday, February 17, 2017 at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Auburn, Alabama, followed by a memorial service and internment at Fort Benning in Georgia.

Hal Moore was born in Bardstown, Kentucky on February 13, 1922. He began his military career in 1945 upon graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry. His first tactical assignment was with the 187th Glider Infantry Regiment in Sapporo, Japan. After being reassigned, he made more than 130 test jumps with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he also jump-tested experimental parachutes. LTG Moore went on to serve in the Korean War as a regimental operations officer. In 1964, he was stationed at Fort Benning and commanded the newly formed air mobile 11th Air Assault Division.

As a lieutenant colonel during the Vietnam War, Moore was commander of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment during the first major battle between the United States and the North Vietnamese forces in November 1965, the Battle of la Drang. Arriving with about 450 soldiers at Landing Zone X-Ray, a field near the Drang River in South Vietnam situated six miles from the Cambodian border, LTG Moore quickly realized he and his men were vastly outnumbered. Nevertheless, he vowed: ''I'll always be the first person on the battlefield, my boots will be the first boots on it, and I'll be the last person off. I'll never leave a body.'' During the battle, American forces were able to gain the upper hand and lead the U.S. to a triumphant victory.

Alongside award-winning journalist Joe Galloway, who was in la Drang as a war correspondent, LTG Moore documented his experiences during the battle in the highly acclaimed 1992 book, We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young. The book received such recognition that it was made into the film, We Were Soldiers. The proceeds from the book helped establish the la Drang Scholarship Fund, which aimed to help the children and

grandchildren of veterans of the la Drang battle.

LTG Moore has certainly accomplished many things in his life but none would have been possible without the love and support of his late wife, Julia; his children, Harold Gregory Moore III, retired Lt. Col. Stephen Moore, Julie Moore Orlowski, Cecile Moore Rainey, and retired Col. David Moore; his eleven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife, Vivian, the nearly 730,000 people in Georgia's 2nd Congressional District, and all Americans, in extending our sincerest appreciation to Lieutenant General Hal Moore, an outstanding leader who, in addition to his selfless service and instrumental role in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, has the respect, admiration, and affection of his brothers-in-arms. Indeed, LTG Moore leaves behind a distinguished legacy of service and leadership in the United States Army.

RECOGNIZING BALDWIN COUNTY FAMILY CONNECTION

HON. JODY B. HICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Baldwin County Family Connection, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children across the great State of Georgia. This organization has done outstanding work to revitalize a county hit hard by the Great Recession.

In 2011, Baldwin County faced an unemployment rate of 16.5 percent and Harrisburg, one of its communities, suffered an unemployment rate of 25 percent. However, through a community of partners who were willing to work together and share their resources, the Baldwin County Family Connection was able to secure funding for a community garden, a walking trail, and a pavilion, providing places for families to gather and thrive.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to have an outstanding organization that restores health and vibrancy to the local community in my home district. It is my honor to congratulate and applaud the Baldwin County Family Connection for its commitment to serving children and families in the Tenth District of Georgia.

A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL KRANTZ

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Michael Krantz for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coining community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

Michael is the CEO of Adventureland Resort in Altoona, Iowa. He has played a key role in constructing the new Monster roller coaster and bringing the popular Jolly Holiday Lights event to Adventureland, where it has received record attendance. Michael also helped to develop and launch Spectator's Sports Bar and Grill in Altoona, and has been given the Tidrick Honors Award for his contributions to the Mentor Iowa program in 2016. Michael and his wife, Kim, have two children, Jack and Emery.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Michael in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Michael on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MR. LARRY PISTORESI, JR.

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and career of Mr. Larry Pistoresi, Jr., one of Chowchilla's finest residents and public servants, and an exceptional leader of his community. Throughout his life, Mr. Pistoresi, Jr. strived to support and enrich the people of Chowchilla. His selflessness and devotion to family, church, and community have undoubtedly left the world a better place.

Larry Pistoresi, Jr. was born and raised as a 4th generation native of Chowchilla, in Madera County. In his youth, Mr. Pistoresi was an active and accomplished athlete, having played on both the football and golf teams at Chowchilla Union High School until his graduation in 1959. Mr. Pistoresi attended college at Santa Clara University and The University of Washington and later served in the United States Army after dedicating himself to his college ROTC program. Mr. Pistoresi was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in 1967, where he was awarded the Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

Mr. Pistoresi returned to Chowchilla after his discharge and worked at Pistoresi Chevrolet Oldsmobile with his father, Larry Pistoresi, Sr., grandfather, Pete, and uncle, Monte, as a car salesman. Something of a sales maverick, he consistently proved that nothing was too big or small to make a favorable deal for his clients. Mr. Pistoresi then set his sights on real estate development, and proceeded to undertake a transformative plan for the Chowchilla area by devoting more than ten years of his life to plan the construction of the Greenhills Estates neighborhood, which nearly doubled the Chowchilla city limit. He also led the effort to establish the Pheasant Run Golf Course, which provides an excellent communal space for the many people seeking new recreational outlets.

Beyond his professional commitments, Mr. Pistoresi was involved in a host of public service engagements, including sitting on the Chowchilla Elementary School Board, serving multiple terms as a Chowchilla City Councilman, and served as Mayor of Chowchilla from 1975 through 76.

Larry Pistoresi, Jr. joins his father, Larry Pistoresi, Sr., and his mother, Bettie Pistoresi, and is survived by his stepmother Velma Pistoresi, stepbrothers Jerry and Kent Danieli, his wife of 47 years Linda Pistoresi, his daughter Laura Pistoresi, his son Daniel Pistoresi and wife Frances and son Bradley Pistoresi. He also leaves behind his loving grandchildren Samuel, Jackson, Noah, Stella and Micah, and countless friends and colleagues. His patriotism, altruism, and infectious personality will be deeply missed.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and career of Mr. Larry Pistoresi, Jr., illustrious and decorated role model for the people of Chowchilla, and an exemplary family man and friend. His life personifies the anecdote that sometimes a small pond needs a big fish to grow wider.

HONORING VELMA JEAN TIDWELL CONDIT

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the passing of Velma Jean Tidwell Condit. A beloved community member, Mrs. Condit dedicated her life to serving others.

After moving to Ceres from Oklahoma with her husband in 1967, she served the ministry with love and devotion. She spent her Sunday mornings teaching Sunday school, was a loyal member of the Women's Fellowship, and throughout her life supported her husband, Pastor Adrian Condit, as they served the Village Chapel Free Will Baptist Church.

With a medical career spanning more than three decades, Mrs. Condit provided patients with compassion and care as a nurse at the Ceres Memorial Hospital and Scenic General in Modesto. She was equally as devoted to her work as she was to her community.

Although she is widely known for her service, she is also beloved by her family for her fried chicken and birthday pies. Mrs. Condit's greatest joy was cooking for and spending time with her family. Even after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2014, and soon after developing dementia, she continued to be a loving wife and mother and will be deeply missed. I offer my sincerest condolences to Pastor Adrian Condit, their children, and family.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Velma Jean Condit as we recognize her tremendous contributions and honor her incredible life.

PET SAFETY AND PROTECTION ACT

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I introduced legislation to put an end to an industry that's taken cruelty to animals to a whole new level.

Animal dealers who operate under a USDA Class B license have been guilty of gross violations of the Animal Welfare Act's minimum standards for the decent treatment of animals.

Class B dealers have routinely kept dogs in overcrowded cages, fed them rotten food and food contaminated with feces, ignored problems like frozen drinking water, failed to provide veterinary care for dogs with serious untreated injuries and diseases, and left live dogs caged up with the carcasses of dead dogs. And if that's not enough to turn your stomach, Class B dealers have beaten, strangled, and shot dogs.

Now, all that would be bad enough, but this story gets even worse. There are two kinds of dealers who sell dogs to research facilities. Class A dealers raise the dogs they sell to researchers, and they are strictly regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Class B dealers, on the other hand, acquire the dogs they sell from so-called random sources. What this means is that Class B dealers buy animals, often with no questions asked, from an unregulated network of suppliers.

Thanks to the work of animal rights groups and undercover investigators, we know that Class B dealers buy dogs that were family pets: pets that have in many cases been stolen or adopted under false pretenses. Class B dealers often acquire lost pets from local pounds or shelters and it's clear that they do it knowingly.

Like millions of Americans, I've got a dog I love. He's a golden retriever named Brody. I get sick to my stomach when I think about someone treating him the way Class B dealers treat the dogs they buy and sell.

The Animal Welfare Act has been in place for fifty years, but Class B dealers are still getting away with murder. The Class B trade in animals creates strong financial incentives for theft, inhumane treatment of animals, and other crime, as the record of this industry over the years has proven. It's time to shut this barbaric system down.

With that end in mind, Congressman CHRIS SMITH and I have introduced legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives that we believe would ensure that all dogs and cats used by research facilities are obtained legally. This legislation, the Pet Safety and Protection Act, would effectively prohibit the use of animals purchased from Class B dealers by scientific and biomedical research institutions.

Specifically, the Pet Safety and Protection Act would require research facilities to obtain dogs and cats from only five sources: Class A dealers, law-abiding publicly owned and operated pounds or shelters, properly licensed research facilities, federal research facilities, or people who have owned the dogs or cats in question for at least a year and who are donating these animals for research.

This legislation would effectively ensure that lost or stolen pets would no longer be slipped into the supply chain for research animals.

Ending the trade in random source dogs won't halt or harm much-needed research. Most researchers have stopped using animals from Class B dealers, and researchers will still be able to procure purpose-bred research animals from a number of more reliable, more humane, and more reputable sources. But, it will ensure that somebody's beloved pet doesn't end up in a Class B dealer's hands.

The Animal Welfare Institute and the Humane Society strongly support this legislation. In fact, the Animal Welfare Institute and the Humane Society have been actively engaged in trying to end this abuse for years, and they know more about this problem than anyone else. I'm grateful to them for their efforts to raise public awareness about this problem, and to enact legislation to end it.

Class B dealers across this country violate the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act every day and cause needless suffering for thousands of dogs and cats, many of which were once beloved family pets. Class B dealers starve, beat, and kill these animals, and they deserve to be shut down.

I urge my colleagues to join me in enacting the Pet Safety and Protection Act so we can put an end to this unnecessary and abhorrent practice.

A TRIBUTE TO DYLAN MULLENIX

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dylan Mullenix for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

Dylan serves as the Assistant Director for the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. With his leadership, the organization has developed The Tomorrow Plan, a long-range plan for the sustainable development of the Greater Des Moines area. In addition, Dylan was instrumental in the creation of the Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Plan. He also serves on other local regional planning organizations. Outside of work, Dylan enjoys following University of Iowa athletics and spending time with his wife, Erin, and son, Jack.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Dylan in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Dylan on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

LATIN AMERICAN ARTICLES

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues several articles that I have written over the years regarding Latin America. As a Member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, these pieces serve to outline and inform discussions that our Committee will cover in the 115th Congress. I include in the RECORD the attached articles.

WHAT REAL PROGRESS ON CUBA SHOULD LOOK LIKE

(By Mel Martinez & Francis Rooney)

When President Obama stepped off Air Force One in Havana, many focused on the historic nature of his visit to Cuba—the first since President Calvin Coolidge. Coverage is focused on a thaw in Cold War animosity, and images of President Obama strolling the Malecón and meeting with Raúl Castro are being broadcast around the world. However, behind those scenes, the Cuban people continue to suffer under a regime that denies them the rights, the freedom, the opportunity, and the dignity they deserve. Without addressing human rights, economic freedom, and freedom of expression, President Obama's trip is likely to be nothing more than speeches and photo ops.

First, President Obama should make it clear that further opening of ties between the U.S. and Cuba is contingent upon further political, economic, and social reforms. These preconditions would make it clear to the Cuban regime that despite the restoration of diplomatic ties, the benefits they seek from trade, investment, and tourism from the United States are destined to benefit the Cuban people—not to buttress a repressive regime.

In Havana, we hope that President Obama reminds the Cuban regime of how far it lags behind its neighbors in the region who have embraced democracy, economic freedom, and the rule of law. Compared to the region, Cuba has remained an economic and political backwater. It must be made clear to the Cuban regime that their restrictions on political freedom, civil rights, free expression, and the rule of law are on the wrong side of history.

To this end, President Obama should push the Cuban regime to begin significant shifts to ensure the rule of law and initial steps towards the creation of an independent judiciary free of Communist Party influence. Protections of human rights, property, and dignity must come before the interests of the Cuban Communist Party. Furthermore, with party poised to hold its Seventh Congress next month, President Obama should suggest that further rapprochement requires that Congress to chart a path towards free and fair elections, and not to serve as a rubber stamp for the next generation of Communist apparatchiks.

More importantly, it must be made clear to the Cuban regime that the United States will not tolerate the continuing brutal detention of human rights activists and regime opposition. In the lead up to President Obama's visit, 300 people have been arrested

since March 8th. Dozens of the Damas de Blanco were arrested before Obama's arrival over the weekend. Their ''crime'' is to demand the freedoms and rights that are not just U.S. interests, but rather fundamental American values. If the harassment and persecution of these reformers continues, President Obama should let the Cuban regime know that this rapprochement will be at least frozen, if not significantly rolled back.

On the economic front, the U.S. private sector cannot be the successor to the Soviet Union and Chavez's Venezuela in propping up the Cuban regime. The Helms-Burton Act will continue to remain the law of the land, and President Obama should remind the Cuban regime that Congress is unlikely to change that without a significant relaxation of the political and economic fetters the Cuban regime places on its people.

Furthermore, President Obama should make it clear that it is not acceptable for the Cuban government to serve as a pass-through middleman who receives investments in dollars or euros, and pays workers in Cuban Pesos that represent a fraction of the value of worker labor. If U.S. firms do invest in Cuba, they must be allowed to pay their workers directly—in dollars.

Additionally, if further investments are made in Cuban telecommunication systems, and if data connections between the U.S. mainland and Cuba are bolstered, the U.S. government should insist that the Cuban people have access to a free, uncensored version of the Internet. Improved telecommunications need to be contingent on ensuring that Cubans can join the global digital commons and communicate freely. Furthermore, with U.S.-Cuba increased data traffic on the horizon, the Obama Administration should make it absolutely clear that Cuba cannot continue to serve as a listening post for Russian and Chinese signals intelligence and cyber espionage aimed at the United States.

While we still believe that the Cuban regime has demonstrated far too little in the way of reform or openness to warrant the steps the Obama Administration has taken in opening to Cuba, we feel that these actions would ensure that his trip to Havana can bring about real benefits for the Cuban people.

US NEEDS PLAN COLOMBIA FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

(By Mel Martinez & Francis Rooney)

One of the many positive items within the budget omnibus deal reached by Congress and approved by the president is the $750 million for assisting the countries of Central America that have been beset by crime and instability—which has, in turn, sent vast numbers of unaccompanied minors northward to the United States to seek safety and economic opportunity.

The $750 million allotted to help El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras will help to target the gang violence that has plagued these nations, combined with efforts to promote the rule of law, reduce corruption, and improve governance in these countries. This assistance is a positive step from the United States, but this crisis cannot be solved with American largesse alone.

Over the past year we have led a project focused on the lessons learned from the past decade of Latin American geopolitical trends, and how these trends affect the relationship between the United States and its hemispheric neighbors. One key lesson from this timeframe is how US assistance is only one part of the equation for addressing criminality and corruption. A willing partner on the ground is as important—if not more important—than the total sum of US assistance.

During the worst years of narcoviolence in Colombia, the Plan Colombia provided [check sum] to the Colombian government for countering the cartels. This assistance would also include training from US forces and high tech surveillance and precision weaponry to target cartel infrastructure and leadership. However, the money and equipment only worked to solve this crisis because they were accompanied by political and military leadership in Colombia willing to make the sacrifices in blood and treasure to defeat the cartels. Colombian leaders understood that the fight against the cartels and rebel groups would also require significant political and economic reforms at home to address structural shortfalls that made cartels and insurgencies viable.

In our overview of the region, we also looked at how Latin American nations are, themselves, emphasizing the importance of the rule of law and reforms to governance that improve not only security, but also economic performance and political freedoms. In this sense, while US assistance can provide financial and technical support, it is also incumbent upon the US to work with its other hemispheric partners to stabilize these countries.

Again, Colombia's experience and success in this area makes it a potential exporter of security expertise and assistance to the region. Reforms and economic structures implemented throughout the region, particularly among the nations of the Pacific Alliance, are also tools that can better integrate Central American economies into the regional economy. This combination of improved security and economic opportunity can starve the flames of gangs and corrupt politicians of their fuel.

Around the region, the growth of a vocal middle class has also increased the pressure on corrupt politicians as the people of Latin America have demanded more of their political class. Like other nations in the region, the assistance the Central American countries receive from the US and other regional partners should also address the need for improved civil society and the independent institutions that foster good governance and the rule of law.

Finally, in confronting the human cost of those fleeing Central America for opportunity elsewhere, we must remember that other nations in the region are our partners in addressing this challenge. The vast majority of those crossing our southern border come from these Central American countries, not Mexico. In fact Mexican nationals are now net migrants out of the United States. With the flow of migrants out of Central America, Mexico also finds itself seeking to better secure its southern borders. Solving this problem—and ensuring that young children do not fall victim to gangs of human traffickers—will require cooperation, not confrontation with Mexico.

The $750 million appropriated to help Central America is a positive first step, but to maximize the return on this investment, it will be necessary to foster a shared regional approach to stabilizing those countries.

ARGENTINA'S FORK IN THE ROAD: CHOOSING BETWEEN COMPETING LATIN AMERICAN NARRATIVES

(By Francis Rooney and Max Angerholzer III)

When the Argentine people go to the polls in October, they will have an opportunity to reject the protectionism and populism that are the hallmarks of current President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's government. There are certainly recent Latin American success stories that point towards a more hopeful path, to include the examples set by more conservative governments like those in Colombia and Mexico. There are also several countries that are both geographically and ideologically closer to home for Argentina that offer valuable lessons as well: consider the Chile of President Michelle Bachelet and former President Ricardo Lagos; the Uruguay of President Tabaré Vázquez and former President Jose ''Pepe'' Mujica; and, notably, Peru and the transformation launched there by former President Alan Garcia.

Regardless of which role models and regional examples are chosen, there are now two clear and divergent narratives competing for the future of Latin America. The first encompasses those nations that have embraced elements of free-markets, economic diversification and integration into global commerce, reinforcing democratic institutions. The Pacific Alliance is a good example of this hopeful trajectory.

The second narrative is one of corruption, cronyism and populism, and the nations who have chosen this path have found themselves increasingly isolated from international commerce and unable to adequately care for their own citizens. Venezuela under Hugo Chavez blazed this trail, and in many ways Argentina and Brazil followed it down a dead end. Largely as a result these countries have missed the economic and democratic revival underway throughout much of the region, and their governments are faced with growing instability resulting from gross economic mismanagement, corruption, and the erosion of democratic institutions.

In the case of Argentina, ''Kirchnerism''—which combines aspects of populism, nationalism, and protectionism—guided the country's development during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This ideology shaped the social and economic institutions of Argentina, leading to the nationalization of the country's largest oil company Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF); the president's rejection of closer economic ties with the European Union; and Argentina's embrace of the protectionist trade bloc Mercosur. The populist economic policies implemented by the administration have also included freezing utility rates and attempting to combat inflation by doctoring official figures. As the Argentine economy has inevitably slowed, inflation and debt have continued to rise, further revealing the shortcomings of this dead-end ideology.

As Christina Kirchner's second term mercifully comes to an end, presidential candidates Daniel Scioli, Sergio Massa, and Mauricio Macri are looking towards a different path. For Scioli and Massa, that means distancing themselves from ''Kirchnrism.'' Scioli has stated that he would break with populism and protectionism. Massa left Kirchner's FPV Party last year and is running as a candidate for the Renewal Front Coalition. The only non-Peronist candidate, Macri, runs on a more pro-market platform and calls for realignment with the West.

Unfortunately, whoever wins the election will have to break the government's habit of excessive social spending, and confront entrenched unions resistant to change. Likewise, potential Vice President Carlos Zanini and many governors and legislators who share the Kirchner ideology may work against free market reforms. Change will have to come gradually if sustainable, free market economics are to truly take root in Argentina.

The United States can help by reaching out to Argentina's next president, enabling him with bilateral trade agreements and resources aimed at promoting free markets, democracy and the rule of law. Efforts should also be made to more closely integrate the country into international trade

and financing institutions. U.S. think tanks that nurture democratic and free market reforms should also do their part. The next Argentinian president will need all the help we can muster in weaning the country off of the Kirchner brand of cronyism and statism.

The United States has similarly offered assistance to Colombia and Panama as they implemented comprehensive economic, legal and security reforms. Greater security and stronger democratic institutions in those countries have led to increased foreign investment, making their economies more globally competitive. As noted, Argentina can also look hopefully at the example of Peru, which has similarly transitioned from a statist, socialist model to one that embraces free trade, foreign investment and closer engagement with the United States.

Ultimately change will have to begin at home with the choice of the Argentinian people in the upcoming election. If the next president decides to break with the past and steer the country out of the dead end of Kirchnerism and Peronist socialism, and towards free markets and more transparent governance, then the United States should be waiting with an outstretched hand.

A VISION FOR THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Consider a region with growing economic and geopolitical importance, home to several of our highest-value trading partners, with significant immigration into and remittances in and out of the U.S., and presenting security challenges vital to our interests. One would think that such a region would be at the top of the list of our foreign policy priorities.

In reality, this region exists in the Western Hemisphere, but our attention to Latin America has been sporadic and episodic since the 1980's and early–1990's. As we moved away from our Cold War-era attention to the region, we had some promising initial steps with efforts at greater regional integration. However, we failed to follow these initial efforts with needed follow-on measures and consistent policy, due to divisive and distracting issues of domestic politics at home and a focus on the Middle East and South Asia, propelled by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As a result, we have been forced to react to events, many of which are dictated by nations openly hostile to the United States.

Whatever the outcome of November 6th might be, the victor has the opportunity, and the responsibility, to build a vision for the reshaping and revitalizing our relationship with the rest of the Western Hemisphere. For the increasingly busy post-campaign transition staffs of President Obama and Governor Romney, it is not too soon to begin laying the groundwork for such a vision.

In a recent exercise we conducted regarding our Western Hemisphere policies and a way forward, we found key items for an Administration's agenda towards the region. An agenda based around an understanding of the need for greater economic ties, a joint approach to security challenges, and shared political and cultural values can be a vision that shows the region that America is not only a power in the region but also a partner.

Through NAFTA and various preceding organizations like the IADB, the United States was once a key driver in the economic integration of the region. There were subsequent free trade agreements with Chile, Colombia, Panama, Peru, and CAFTA–DR with the countries of Central America and the Dominican Republic. While these trade pacts have opened up economic opportunities for the nations involved, we have failed to capitalize on follow-up opportunities that would further the economic vitality and integration of the region.

Integration of the economies of the United States and Canada with those of the Caribbean and Latin America can not only provide economic benefits but also address the economic inequality that fuels governments which are hostile to the United States, and deprives these nations of the bounty that their natural and human resources could provide. For all the socialist vitriol of leaders like Hugo Chavez, his promises to improve the lot of impoverished masses have kept him in power. His opponent in the recent election also made clear that he would continue many of these social programs.

Furthermore, these commercial partnerships present a clear alternative to the mercantilist policies of China, provide opportunities for American manufacturers and consumers, and create a bloc of Western Hemisphere nations united in negotiations regarding a Pacific trade agenda.

These commercial ties can also leverage educational exchange in strengthening regional ties. As individuals from the Western Hemisphere come to study at our greatest colleges and universities, we can not only attract the best and brightest talent here, but also strengthen and enrich shared values throughout the region. To accomplish this, we must decouple adverse perceptions about mass immigration from a policy which allows visas for top students and entrepreneurs.

In an era where crime and terrorism have undergone the same globalization as economies and cultures, the security challenges of the Western Hemisphere are not the concern of one nation. Building on the success of Plan Colombia, we can continue the fight against narcoterror across the region, based around a model of mutually reinforcing kinetic operations and the building and strengthening of institutions resistant to the pressures of crime and corruption.

Also, as narcotics move from Latin America through Africa into Europe, these issues are no longer solely an American concern. Our traditional security partners in Europe also have a role in the Western Hemisphere through shared interests and their historical and cultural ties to the region.

While it is often an issue that divides the U.S. from other nations in the region, it must also be understood that the oppression, intellectual bankruptcy, and the aging regime of Cuba present a security risk to all of the Americas.

Beyond these economic and security concerns, the vacuum created by the lack of consistent U.S. attention requires a shift in our political approach to the hemisphere. The OAS, long the main multilateral institution for the hemisphere, is now on life support. While it would be destructive to the organization for the U.S. to withdraw its support for the OAS, the next President must also build a close multilateral relationship with the leaders from the region. While it is true that many question the utility of the regional summits, the President can set forth a U.S. vision for the Western Hemisphere through a summit with the Presidents of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, and the Prime Minister of Canada.

Such a vision can revitalize our policies and partnerships with the Western Hemisphere. No longer can we take this region for granted as merely our backyard, nor can we miss the opportunities presented by a vibrant, integrated Western Hemisphere.

HONORING I LOVE LIFE

HON. KRISTI L. NOEM

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a radio program that has shared stories of hope, faith and encouragement for more than 35 years. In a world so often filled with heartbreaking narratives, the I Love Life program and its host, Jerry Dahmen, has showcased the stories of more than 1,500 people who have overcome challenges, achieved the unexpected, and inspired those around them.

I Love Life is broadcast out of KXRB in South Dakota, but can be heard across the country. Its inspirational programming has earned dozens of broadcasting and community awards while tackling some of the time's toughest issues, including teenage suicide, human trafficking, love and loss.

The program may make you laugh or cry, but either way, it's likely to teach you that if you can't change your circumstances, maybe you can change your attitude in a way that focuses on gratitude. Because of this program, millions of listeners across the world have been inspired to join in the chorus saying that I too love life.

A TRIBUTE TO JILL NISWANDER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Jill Niswander for being named a 2017 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2017 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 680 past business leaders and growing.

With a passion for volunteering, Jill left the world of corporate finance and co-founded Dress for Success Des Moines in 2011. Jill later became an advocate for refugees when her career took her into business development at an Iowa community health organization. Now she is the Director of Communications and Fund Development at EMBARC, an advocacy and resource center for Burmese refugees. Additionally, Jill works to empower women by serving on the Board of Directors for the Beacon of Life. Jill is also a proud wife and wonderful mother to four beautiful children.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Jill in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great

state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Jill on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2017 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Mick Mulvaney, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1223–S1313

Senate continued in the session that began on Thursday, February 16, 2017. See next volume of the Congressional Record.

Measures Introduced: Thirty-three bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 405–437, S.J. Res. 23, and S. Res. 62–63. **Pages S1304–05**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 62, authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017, October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, and October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019. **Page S1304**

Pruitt Nomination—Cloture: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Scott Pruitt, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. **Pages S1229–75, S1275–95**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 54 yeas to 46 nays (Vote No. 69), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S1229–30**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 51 yeas 49 nays (Vote No. EX. 68), Mick Mulvaney, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Routine lists in the Army, Navy.

Pages S1226–29, S1275, S1313

Messages from the House: **Page S1302**

Executive Communications: **Pages S1302–04**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1305–06**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1306–13**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1299–S1302**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1313**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1313**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—69) **Pages S1229, S1230**

Evening Session: Senate convened at 10 a.m., on Thursday, February 16, 2017. (For complete Digest of today's proceedings, see next volume of the Congressional Record.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

RESHAPING THE U.S. MILITARY

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine reshaping the United States military, after receiving testimony from David A. Ochmanek, RAND Corporation; James P. Thomas, The Telemus Group; Thomas M. Donnelly, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies; and Bryan Clark, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

IMPROVING TSA

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security concluded a hearing to examine stakeholder perspectives on improving the Transportation Security Administration for the security of the traveling public, after receiving testimony from Stephen A. Alterman, Cargo Airline Association, on behalf of Aviation Security Advisory Committee, and Sharon Pinkerton, Airlines for America, both of Washington, D.C.; Kim Day, Denver International Airport, Denver, Colorado; and Mark Laustra, Analogic Corporation, Peabody, Massachusetts.

NOMINATION

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senators Donnelly and Young, testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

NOMINATION

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of David Friedman, of New York, to be Ambassador to Israel, Department of State, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Graham and former Senator Joe Lieberman, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues concluded a hearing to examine democracy and human rights, focusing on the case for United States leadership, after receiving testimony from former Representative Mark Green, International Republican Institute, Carl Gershman, The National Endowment for Democracy, Kenneth Wollack, National Democratic Institute, and Hala Aldosari, Arab Gulf States Institute, all of Washington, D.C.; Garry Kasparov, Human Rights Foundation, New York, New York; and Danilo Maldonado Machado.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Rules and Administration: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 62) authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017, October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, and October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019, and adopted its rules of procedure for the 115th Congress.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 96 public bills, H.R. 1101–1196; 3 private bills, H.R. 1197–1199; and 24 resolutions, H.J. Res. 76–82; H. Con. Res. 28–29; and H. Res. 131–145 were introduced. **Pages H1296–H1303**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1306–07**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 393, to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces (H. Rept. 115–13). **Page H1296**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Rogers (KY) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1247**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:45 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H1255**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Pages H1255, H1280**

Member Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Mulvaney, wherein he resigned as Representative for the Fifth Congressional District of South Carolina, effective immediately. **Page H1255**

Whole Number of the House: The Chair announced to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Mulvaney, the whole number of the House is 431. **Page H1255**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Bishop (MI) wherein he resigned from the Committees on the Judiciary and Education and the Workforce. **Page H1259**

Committee Elections: The House agreed to H. Res. 131, electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives. **Page H1259**

Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska": The House passed H.J. Res. 69, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States

Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska", by a yea-and-nay vote of 225 yeas to 193 nays, Roll No. 98.

Pages H1259–68, H1278–79

H. Res. 123, the rule providing for consideration of the joint resolutions (H.J. Res. 43) and (H.J. Res. 69) was agreed to yesterday, February 15th.

Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients: The House passed H.J. Res. 43, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients, by a recorded vote of 230 ayes to 188 noes, Roll No. 99.

Pages H1268–78, H1279–80

H. Res. 123, the rule providing for consideration of the joint resolutions (H.J. Res. 43) and (H.J. Res. 69) was agreed to yesterday, February 15th.

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. tomorrow, February 17. **Page H1280**

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Representatives Jackson Lee and Moore. **Page H1280**

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1279 and H1279–80. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES; PROS AND CONS OF RESTRICTING SNAP PURCHASES

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1029, the "Pesticide Registration Enhancement Act of 2017"; and H.R. 953, the "Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017"; and hearing entitled "Pros and Cons of Restricting SNAP Purchases". H.R. 1029 was ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 953 was ordered reported, without amendment. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MEMBERS' DAY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a hearing entitled "Members' Day". Testimony was heard from Representatives Radewagen, Cleaver, LoBiondo, Hanabusa, Williams, and Brownley of California.

MILITARY SERVICES 5TH GENERATION TACTICAL AIRCRAFT CHALLENGES AND F–35 JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER PROGRAM UPDATE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a hearing entitled "Military Services 5th Generation Tactical Aircraft Challenges and F–35 Joint Strike Fighter Program Update". Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Chris Bogdan, USAF, Program Executive Officer, F–35 Joint Program Office; Rear Admiral Dewolfe "Chip" Miller, III, USN, Director, Air Warfare; Lieutenant General Jon Davis, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Aviation; and Lieutenant General Select Jerry D. Harris Jr., USAF, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans, Programs, Requirements.

FEDERAL WAGE AND HOUR POLICIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ECONOMY

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held a hearing entitled "Federal Wage and Hour Policies in the Twenty-First Century Economy". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MODERNIZING ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled "Modernizing Environmental Laws: Challenges and Opportunities for Expanding Infrastructure and Promoting Development and Manufacturing". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ASSESSING THE U.S.–EU COVERED AGREEMENT

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance held a hearing entitled "Assessing the U.S.–EU Covered Agreement". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IRAN ON NOTICE

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Iran on Notice". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

A DANGEROUS AND SOPHISTICATED ADVERSARY: THE THREAT TO THE HOMELAND POSED BY CARTEL OPERATIONS

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security held a hearing entitled ''A Dangerous and Sophisticated Adversary: The Threat to the Homeland Posed by Cartel Operations''. Testimony was heard from Vice Admiral Charles Ray, Deputy Commandant for Operations, U.S. Coast Guard; Chief Paul Beeson, Commander, Joint Task Force—West, Arizona, Department of Homeland Security; Matt Allen, Assistant Director for HIS Investigative Programs, Homeland Security Investigations, Department of Homeland Security; and Luis E. Arreaga, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Department of State.

WATCHDOG RECOMMENDATIONS: A BETTER WAY AHEAD TO MANAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency held a hearing entitled ''Watchdog Recommendations: A Better Way Ahead to Manage the Department of Homeland Security''. Testimony was heard from John Roth, Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security; and Rebecca Gambler, Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, Government Accountability Office.

COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee concluded a hearing on committee funding for the 115th Congress. Testimony was heard from Chairman Hensarling, Chairman Thornberry, Chairman Roe of Tennessee, Chairman Goodlatte, Chairman Chaffetz, Chairman Black, Chairman Smith of Texas, and Representatives Maxine Waters of California, Smith of Washington, Walz, Conyers, Cummings, Yarmuth, and Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held a hearing on H.R. 372, the ''Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017''. Testimony was heard from Representatives Gosar and Austin Scott of Georgia and public witnesses.

THE STATE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice held a hearing entitled ''The State of Religious Liberty in America''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

NASA: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''NASA: Past, Present, and Future''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

STATE OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMY

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax and Capital Access held a hearing entitled ''State of the Small Business Economy''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE USE OF OFFICIAL TIME FOR UNION ACTIVITIES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity; and Subcommittee on Government Operations of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held a hearing entitled ''The Use of Official Time for Union Activities at the Department of Veterans Affairs''. Testimony was heard from Cindy Brown Barnes, Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security, Government Accountability Office; Kimberly Perkins McLeod, Acting Executive Director, Labor Management Relations, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: organizational business meeting to consider subcommittee assignments, Time to be announced, S–216, Capitol.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

Friday, February 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will continue in the session that began on Thursday, February 16, 2017. See next volume of the Congressional Record.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1 p.m., Friday, February 17

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 1 p.m.

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