United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017 No. 90

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 24, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TREY HOLLINGSWORTH 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.

TRUMP BUDGET CUTS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday President Trump released the most reckless and heartless budget I have ever seen in my life. It slashes virtually every worthwhile program: programs that help the middle class, seniors, and veterans. But what I find particularly offensive and troubling is that his budget is a radical assault on people living in poverty or right on the edge. It guts Medicaid, housing assistance, and Social Security disability insurance benefits.

The Trump budget also decimates the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP, our Nation's first line of defense against hunger. It cuts the program by $193 billion over 10 years. That is a 25 percent reduction. President Trump makes these ruthless cuts by cutting eligibility and reducing benefits. He also adds a new requirement that States pay 25 percent of the cost of the benefits.

It may be a nice sound bite to suggest that States should share the cost of providing SNAP benefits to their residents, but the reality is that State budgets are already stretched incredibly thin, and communities are already suffering from a decrease in Federal investment in States. The Trump budget compounds this problem by eliminating dozens of programs that families in States across the country rely on. This will only exacerbate the stress on State budgets to deliver basic services to their residents.

If that isn't bad enough, President Trump would allow States to cut benefit levels to manage the costs they would incur under this cruel budget. This means that families living in certain States would see their already too-modest benefits drop through no fault of their own.

At the same time, President Trump is proposing new fees on retail stores applying to accept SNAP benefits. We know access to food is a huge concern, especially in rural areas and in cities, and such a wrongheaded approach will further limit the ability of families on SNAP to shop for nutritious food.

In addition, President Trump's budget makes it even more difficult for able-bodied adults without dependents to receive modest food benefits. Current law allows States to waive the time limits imposed on these vulnerable adults, which include veterans, by the way, but President Trump wants to severely limit the ability of States to request these waivers. Estimates suggest that in any given month, this proposal would restrict access to SNAP for up to 1 million Americans struggling to find work. Mr. Speaker, kicking people off of SNAP doesn't help them find a job. It only makes them hungrier, weaker, and even less likely to qualify for work. It is simply a rotten thing to do.

Now, quite frankly, I was a little surprised by the magnitude of these cuts given the fact that President Trump's Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, testified before the House Committee on Agriculture last week in strong defense of SNAP. He said: '' . . . we have no proposed changes. You don't try to fix things that aren't broken.''

How are we to trust this administration's promises on anything when they tell us one thing on Wednesday and release a budget that does the exact opposite not even a week later?

During the past 2 years, the House Committee on Agriculture has held 21 hearings on SNAP. As the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Nutrition, I have participated in each one of them. What we have learned from our witnesses, both Democrats and Republicans, is that SNAP works. It is one of the most effective and efficient programs run by the Federal Government. It expands in times of economic hardship and contracts as our economy recovers.

With a modest food assistance benefit of about $1.40 per person per meal, SNAP alleviates hunger and reduces poverty. It supplements the food budgets of families and helps them make ends meet. Innovations in the program have helped to spur the consumption of healthier food. I would like to remind my colleagues that two-thirds of the people on SNAP are children, seniors, or disabled. The majority of people on the program who are able to work do work.

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If you want to talk about reforming the program and how do we look to the future, we need to focus on how to make the program even better. We need to make sure that anyone who needs this benefit has access to it. We need to support and expand innovative programs that help increase the purchasing power of SNAP. We need to increase SNAP benefits so that families that are helped by the program can actually access more nutritious food that lasts through the month.

Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump is used to dining with billionaires at Mar-a-Lago and Trump Tower, so I am not at all shocked by his lack of knowledge about our antihunger safety net or by his lack of interest in helping the most vulnerable in our society. It is clear from his budget that he does not have a clue.

I urge my colleagues to join me in rejecting this reckless and heartless proposal that will devastate so many families that we represent. We must, instead, support efforts to strengthen SNAP and end hunger now. We are supposed to end hunger now, not make it worse.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about an organization that is near and dear to my heart, the Lions Clubs International. I am a member of my hometown organization, the Howard Area Lions Club. I am proud that for many years it has been the largest Lions Club in Pennsylvania, despite being in a very rural area. Last year marked our club's 40th anniversary.

The Howard Area Lions Club has consistently earned the recognition as the largest Lions Club in Pennsylvania. There are probably many factors that have led them to this title, but none more significant than their commitment to the Lions Club motto: We serve. The members of this club have served as the chartering organization for the Howard Scout Troop 353. I have been honored to serve as a Scoutmaster of that troop since they first assumed this responsibility.

The idea of the Lions Club began 100 years ago in Chicago. A 38-year-old businessman named Melvin Jones told members of the local business club that they should reach beyond their business issues and address the betterment of their communities and the world, and they agreed. Three years later, the Lions Club became an international organization. Melvin Jones inspired generations of people to become civic-minded individuals dedicated to using their talents and their ambition to improve their communities without financial reward. Melvin Jones had a personal code: ''You can't get very far until you start doing something for somebody else.''

Well, the Lions Club redoubled its commitment to help others when a young advocate for the disabled spoke at the 1925 Lions Clubs International convention. This woman challenged the Lions to become ''knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness.'' Of course, this woman was Helen Keller.

Helen Keller developed a fever at 18 months of age that left her blind and deaf. After working with an exceptional teacher, Helen Keller learned sign language and braille, and a few years later she learned to speak.

The Lions accepted Helen Keller's challenge and ever since have worked on several projects to prevent blindness, restore eyesight, and improve eye care for folks all around the world. Sight became one of the Lions' defining causes. Many are familiar with its eyeglasses recycling program where individuals can donate reading glasses they no longer need.

Mr. Speaker, service to others is what makes Lions Clubs International such a powerful force of good in the world. I am grateful that Lions Clubs around the globe serve millions annually. I am so proud to be a member of an organization that not only lives up to its remarkable ideals but exceeds them time and time again.

Congratulations to the Lions Clubs International on their centennial anniversary.

BROKEN PROMISES OF THE TRUMP BUDGET

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday President Trump laid out his budget request for next year. It represents the most draconian disinvestment in our country by any President in modern history, and it is littered with broken promises and fundamental errors in simple math.

It is a budget that makes very clear that this President is not fighting for working Americans and their families, and, in fact, he is breaking his promises to make their lives better. It is shockingly devoid of the basic policy details necessary to back up its deficit-cutting bravado. It includes an accounting discrepancy so large—over $2 trillion—that it can only be characterized as willfully hiding the ball from the American public, an exercise in extreme incompetence, or both.

The purpose of a budget is to lay out the most complete description of a President's governing vision for the country. By that measure and many others, this budget is an embarrassment. It is no wonder that it has already been panned by Members on both sides of the aisle in this House. My Republican friend, Representative MIKE SIMPSON, was absolutely right when he said of proposals like this one that the House can't pass this budget. Nor will it. It is dead on arrival in Congress because Democrats and Republicans both understand that we can't provide economic security to the American people and keep them safe from threats if we gut our investments in doing both. That is what the President's budget would do.

As The Washington Post eloquently pointed out, the Trump budget ''is fundamentally at odds with what Trump told voters.'' President Trump promised middle class American workers he would fight for them and their families. If implemented, his budget would make it harder for them to send their kids to college, access job training to get ahead, or even just stay in the middle class, and devastate seniors' long-term care. The dramatic cuts he makes to nutrition assistance, elimination of heating assistance during the winter months and Meals on Wheels will hit low-income Americans and seniors hard, particularly in rural communities.

And those, Mr. Speaker, are just a selection. He is breaking his campaign promise not to cut Medicaid and Social Security, taking $1.4 trillion out of Medicaid over the next 10 years, without offering a policy to achieve those cuts, and slashing funds for the Social Security disability insurance programs that serve 10 million Americans. Frankly, the President made fun of those with disabilities during the course of the campaign, and now he cuts billions of dollars from the ability of the disabled to maintain some degree of dignity and health.

President Trump also pledged that the American taxpayer would not pay—would not pay—for the border wall he wants to build. Of course, his budget asks the U.S. taxpayer to pay for that wall. When it comes to keeping Americans safe from threats overseas, President Trump's budget fails miserably as well, cutting the budgets for diplomacy and foreign aid that complement the work of our military in combating ISIS and other terror groups. Additionally, it punishes middle class Federal employees in every congressional district in our country for choosing to serve their country by cutting their pay and retirement benefits.

One after another, the budget breaks the President's promises. At every turn, it undermines our long-term security and prosperity by ignoring the critical lessons from past Republican administrations when it comes to basic economics. Like past Republican budgets, the Trump budget relies on discredited theories of how economic growth would result from tax policies. Unlike past attempts, however, the Trump budget double counts its fantasy supply side boost in an accounting error so large it could pay for the Pentagon 3 years over.

Mr. Speaker, we know this budget will go nowhere in Congress. I believe there will not be a Republican in the House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker,

who will offer this budget on the floor of this House. It does tell us, however, a lot about this President and his priorities. Former Vice President Biden has been known to say: ''Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget.''

President Trump has now shown us his budget, and none of us should be surprised. So now it is up to Democrats and Republicans in this House and in the Senate to work together to agree on a budget resolution and move appropriations bills through regular order. Let us hope we can do that. The American public would expect us to do that, and our country needs us to do that.

We must not disinvest in those things that have made America great and will enable us to lay the groundwork for another century of American leadership.

□ 1015

REMEMBERING U.S. MARINE CORPS LANCE CORPORAL MARC LUCAS TUCKER

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

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to rise today in the memory of United States Marine Corps Lance Corporal Mark Lucas Tucker, who was killed on June 8, 2005, in a nonhostile vehicle accident on Alternate Supply Route Uranium in Iraq.

Lance Corporal Tucker, a Pontotoc, Mississippi, native, was assigned to the 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Force Service Support Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan, attached to the 2nd Force Service Support Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Forward.

Lance Corporal Tucker's mother, Donna Bagwell, is seated in the gallery today. She said her son wanted to be a marine from the time he was a little boy. He wanted to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, who also served in the Marine Corps.

In 2003, Lance Corporal Tucker enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. In 2005, he volunteered to go to Iraq to protect our Nation in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mrs. Bagwell said her son planned to stay in the United States Marine Corps until retirement and make it a career. ''He loved America,'' Mrs. Bagwell said, ''He loved the Marine Corps and everything about it.''

Lance Corporal Tucker is survived by his parents, Kelly and Donna Bagwell, and Mark Tucker; and siblings, Christy Irby, Pam Bolen, and Terry Bagwell.

Lance Corporal Tucker demonstrated the characteristics that make us all proud to be Americans, and we honor his service and his life.

Semper fi, Lance Corporal Tucker.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise, as we enter this Memorial Day weekend, to recognize all of those great Americans who have given their lives for the freedoms that we enjoy.

This Nation can never forget those who preserved our Nation and died way too soon. God bless all those who have died in defense of this great Nation, and God bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that it is not in order to refer to an occupant in the gallery.

REMEMBERING SENATOR RALPH A. HUNT, SR.

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of a dear friend, a North Carolina giant, the Honorable Ralph A. Hunt, Sr.: a community leader, businessman, educator, former North Carolina State Senator; and a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Mr. Speaker, Ralph Hunt was a resident of Durham County, North Carolina, a county that Congressman DAVID PRICE and I proudly represent. He was my constituent.

Mr. Speaker, Ralph Hunt was also a native of my congressional district, having grown up in an adjoining county called Granville County, North Carolina. He was the seventh of eight children born in 1932 to Johnnie and Amanda Harris Hunt.

As a young student at Mary Potter High School in Oxford, North Carolina, which was the only high school for African Americans during those days, Ralph grew up during the period of legal and forced segregation in the South, which helped lay the foundation for Ralph and others like him to get an education. Mary Potter High School was a nationally renowned high school for African Americans.

Ralph Hunt, Sr., went on to further his education at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, which is a Presbyterian school. He was drafted into the United States Army during his junior year in school, but he was honorably discharged 2 years later from the United States Army.

He then returned to North Carolina to complete his college education, earning a degree in mathematics in 1956. After spending many years as an educator at Mary Potter High School and Hillside High School, Ralph was elected to the Durham City Council. He was one of only two African Americans serving on the city council at that time. His fellow council members selected him to serve as mayor pro tempore.

Ralph was then elected to the North Carolina State Senate in 1985 and served many years. During his tenure, Senator Hunt was a true statesman who led with conviction. He served as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, served as majority whip, and a member of the Joint Legislative Commission on Government Operations. He introduced the legislation that changed the election law in North Carolina to allow a 40 percent threshold to avoid a runoff in a primary.

In 1993, Senator Hunt was appointed by then-Governor Jim Hunt to the prestigious North Carolina Utilities Commission, where he would serve as its chair. Ralph Hunt, Sr., retired from the North Carolina Utilities Commission in 2001 and returned to the State Senate very briefly from 2004 to 2005.

Ralph's career in public service should serve as a marker we can all strive to meet. He was a visionary who helped bring the Durham community to be the economic leader that it is today.

Ralph Hunt, Sr., achieved many great things in his life, but his greatest achievement, Mr. Speaker, was his loving family: his dear wife of more than 50 years, Rebecca; and his three children, Ralph, Jr., Reginald, and Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Durham, the county of Durham, and the State of North Carolina all shine brighter because of the life and work of Senator Ralph Hunt, Sr. We will miss him dearly, but his legacy lives on.

Everything God gave to Ralph, he gave it back to his family and to his community. I said those words at his memorial service the other day, and I say it now from the well of the U.S. House of Representatives: Everything that God gave to Ralph Hunt, Sr., he gave it back to his family and to his community.

Mr. Speaker, in just a few moments, after the next Republican speaker, my dear friend and colleague, Congressman DAVID PRICE, who was also a dear friend of Ralph Hunt, Sr., will give additional remarks in tribute to this great leader.

HONORING CAPTAIN AMY LYNN SVOBODA

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

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Captain Amy Lynn Svoboda, my friend, A–10 squadron mate, and pioneer.

Amy grew up in Illinois and graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1989, serving as a co-captain of the volleyball team. She attended pilot training, then served as a T–37 instructor pilot before coming to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base to become an A–10 pilot in 1996.

Amy was 1 of only 14 female fighter pilots in the Air Force at the time, and I got to know her when she joined me in the 354th Fighter Squadron Bulldogs as the second female pilot ever in that unit.

Amy was quickly well-respected as a pilot and an officer, and well liked by so many. Her positive personality was infectious, and her dedication to excellence was a model to us all. She specifically inspired me as an example of how

to be a woman warrior without losing herself in the tough environment of a fighter squadron. It was a relief and a blessing to finally have a wing woman.

On the dark, moonless night of May 27, 1997, during a tactical training mission with night vision goggles on the Barry Goldwater Air Force Range, Amy paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving her country. I was on the range that night, and I remember like it was yesterday the deafening silence when I called her repeatedly on the radio in the hopes that she ejected before her A–10 crashed. Our hopes were dashed, and Amy's extraordinary life was snuffed out with so much potential ahead.

Her service and sacrifice is not forgotten. After the tragic accident, the Air Force finally invested in changing the lighting in all A–10 cockpits to be fully NVG compatible, likely saving lives. Those of us who served with her continue to be inspired by her example and her legacy. Generations of young girls will fly in the jet stream that she forged as a pioneering aviator.

I cannot believe that it has been 20 years since that night. On Saturday, we will honor Captain Svoboda's service, bravery, and sacrifice with her family and friends, just 2 days before Memorial Day.

Thank you, Amy, for your willingness to fight for our freedoms. We will never forget the price that you paid.

REMEMBERING SENATOR RALPH A. HUNT, SR.

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

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleague, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, in honoring the life of a towering figure in North Carolina politics, Senator Ralph Hunt, Sr., of Durham.

I first got to know Senator Hunt early in my political career when I was chairman of the North Carolina Democratic Party. Ralph was already a business and community leader in Durham, having served in the U.S. Army, taught in Durham city schools, started a career in business, and served as one of the first African-American members of the city council, where he served from 1975 to 1985, including 3 years as mayor pro tempore.

Ralph was a genial, energetic, and beloved leader. He was also a tireless advocate for the needs of the people of Durham—all of the people. It is no coincidence that the city has undergone a renaissance over the course of Ralph's long career. He served as executive director of the Durham Business and Professional Chain for over a decade. He provided leadership to the Mutual Savings and Loan Association, which provided vital access to capital for many Durham residents; and to the Downtown Durham Revitalization Foundation board, which helped pave the way for the thriving downtown we see today.

Ralph, of course, is best known, as my colleague has noted, for his service in the North Carolina Senate from 1985 to 1993, and again from 2004 to 2005. He held various leadership positions in our caucus, and he mentored a new generation of progressive elected officials. The North Carolina Senate still bears the mark of his leadership.

In the intervening years, between those years of service in the Senate, he served with distinction on the North Carolina Utilities Commission. More recently—and I respect the fact that Ralph took this on late in his life—he assumed the challenge of chairing the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People at a critical juncture for that organization. In fact, Ralph always stepped up to the plate and always took on challenges when he was needed. He was an exemplary citizen. He was also a devoted husband, a loving father and grandfather, and a community leader who will long be remembered in Durham and throughout our State.

As we mourn his passing, we give thanks for his life of strong citizenship and service.

CREATING AWARENESS ON POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight a problem that impacts one in every nine women in our Nation today: postpartum depression.

As you can see on this poster, the condition can impact any mother, regardless of background or regardless of circumstance. Warning signs often include: feeling overwhelmed, changes in sleep patterns, unexplained anger, weeping or sadness, difficulty concentrating, unexplained changes in appetite, and feeling anxious or nervous.

Fortunately, if you are a new mother—and you don't have to go through this alone, remember this—there are great organizations in my community in south Florida, like Postpartum Support International. They have dedicated staff and volunteers who are ready to listen, to help, and to provide you with the resources and the referrals that you need to overcome this condition and get back to enjoying your family.

I would like to encourage every new mom in south Florida who may be experiencing any of these conditions to please get the help that you need now by calling 1–844–642–6667. Together, we can end postpartum depression in south Florida and, indeed, around our Nation.

□ 1030

HONORING PEPE BADIA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Joseph ''Pepe'' Badia for his commitment to expand educational opportunities for our south Florida students.

Pepe's latest philanthropic venture allowed for the establishment of a scholarship at my alma mater, Miami Dade College, in the name of its president, Eduardo Padron.

Pepe Badia came to Miami at a young age, just like I did and so many others at that time, fleeing the regime of Castro. His father began a new business in a small storefront in Miami, where he and Pepe, by themselves, packaged spices by hand and distributed them to local bodegas around the city. Today, that small storefront has grown into an international giant known as Badia Spices.

Pepe Badia has used his success to truly make a difference in our community, regularly donating portions of sales to many local and national charities and scholarships.

I join with the Miami Dade College familia, but, truly, all of south Florida, in thanking Pepe Badia for making our paradise an even groovier place in which to live.

WISHING JAY KISLAK A HAPPY 95TH BIRTHDAY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor and wish a happy 95th birthday to Jay Kislak, a valued member of our south Florida community who has dedicated himself to preserving the history of our great Nation.

Jay Kislak began his career as a real estate agent at the young age of 18, a trade he learned from his father who instilled within him the value of hard work, persistence, and attention to detail.

Jay left his hometown of Hoboken, New Jersey, to pursue higher education at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Finance. Jay Kislak graduated early to enlist in the United States Navy, serving as a naval aviator for 3 years of Active Duty, followed by 10 years of service in the Naval Reserve.

The great State of Florida welcomed Jay Kislak and his family in 1953 with a promise of a better future, and it beckoned the young entrepreneur to seek our new business ventures. It was in south Florida that Jay grew his father's humble business into the national real estate giant that it is today, with residential and industrial properties spanning from Florida to Nevada.

Jay Kislak's immense success allowed him the opportunity to explore his true passion: the history and culture of the early Americas. Jay, along with his wife, Jean, established the Jay I. Kislak Foundation to advance knowledge and understanding of world cultures and history. The Kislak Foundation's impressive collections include one-of-a-kind maps, books, letters, paintings, and many other artifacts.

In the 50 years that Jay dedicated to collecting these rare treasures, he assembled one of the world's best and most significant private collections of documents and artifacts related to the

early Americas. Recognizing the significance of his impressive collection, Jay made an extraordinary gift in the year 2004 to our Library of Congress and to the American people with a contribution of 4,000 items, which are now on display permanently. The Library of Congress estimates that over 3 million visitors have visited this magnificent exhibit made possible by the generous donation of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation.

Because of Jay's extensive background in and knowledge of our great Nation's history, he has served on numerous boards and has held many leadership posts in our community.

Throughout all of his success, Jay Kislak never ceases to give back to our local institutions. His latest contribution to south Florida is the establishment of two new permanent exhibits at the University of Miami's Otto Richter Library and at Miami Dade College's Freedom Tower.

I join with many in saying thank you to Jay Kislak and his family for his decades of hard work and dedication that he has given to bring the world these magnificent historical artifacts.

Thank you, Jay Kislak, and many more years.

ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Asian Pacific Heritage Month.

In May of each year, we come together to celebrate the Asian and Pacific heritage cultures that have made up America for generations. It is time to recognize those important significant roles that Asian Americans play in our American story.

We are very lucky in the San Joaquin Valley to have a community rich with culture and ethnic diversity. Our Asian-American and Pacific Islander neighbors are an integral part of that richness.

From the Chinese Americans, who helped build the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s, to the Japanese American farmers, who cultivated our valley in the early 1900s, to the Hmong and Vietnamese Americans who joined our community beginning in the late 1970s and 1980s after the Vietnam War, these Asian communities all have an important story that have added value to our country.

As we reflect upon Asian Pacific Heritage Month, I am proud to join all Asian Americans and the Pacific Islanders in my district and across our country in celebration. So let me thank all of our Asian Americans for their contributions to our country.

CELEBRATING MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the significance of Memorial Day this coming weekend, which we will celebrate across our Nation.

This weekend, I will have the honor and the privilege to participate in three Memorial Day ceremonies in my district. We will pause to memorialize and thank those American servicemen and -women who have made the ultimate sacrifice and to mourn the loss with their families.

Words, for me, never seem adequate to express a profound thank-you, having members of families and my own family that have served and that have made those sacrifices, for these men and women are our heroes. They gave America the most precious thing they had: the last full measure of devotion to country. Because they did, we are who we are today: a free and prosperous nation that is reflected around the world in most positive ways.

Our valley and our Nation owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to these individuals and their families who so selflessly answered the call of duty, and our Nation can never, ever say thank you enough.

Their sacrifice, bravery, therefore, must never, ever be forgotten. We must continue to work on behalf of veterans and their families. Whether it is cutting through red tape with their veterans' claims or helping with assistance programs or educational benefits, we can always and should do more.

As President John F. Kennedy said: ''As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.'' So each day, not just on Memorial Day, we must work to ensure that our veterans and soldiers who today are on Active Duty in harm's way all around the world and their families receive the benefits that they have earned.

On Monday, we will honor and we will remember and we will pledge never to forget, and we will say, in our most humble way, thank you.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

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

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate May as National Foster Care Month. I also welcome those currently in and alumni of our foster care system, along with our supporters, who are visiting Capitol Hill today.

Foster Care Month is a very small way to acknowledge the youth that are a part of the system, along with all of those who make an enormous difference in their lives. This month is about improving the foster care system and providing support to the individuals who selflessly make this system work.

The success of our country depends upon the well-being of our youth today. We know, through much social research, that family stability is directly linked to less behavioral and academic problems. We have the duty as a nation to empower all children so they can have the same sense of promise and possibility as any other, regardless of their circumstances.

National Foster Care Month is a time to celebrate the selfless men and women who embrace children in the foster care system and recommit to helping more youth find permanent families so they can, too, experience stability and the freedom to fulfill their limitless potential.

Mr. Speaker, the foster care system has always and will always be near and dear to my heart. My wife, Angie, and I adopted two children, Austin and Jessica, then 8 and 9, respectively, through the foster care system.

The idea that children belong in stable families is not only one of the most bipartisan issues I have the privilege of working on, but it is one that is important to me and dear to me. Nothing is more important to a child's upbringing and long-term success than a loving and stable home.

The bedrock of the American story is a strong and supportive family. We must do everything we can to care for all of our youth so they can be free from harm and set up for success so that they might pen our country's unwritten future.

Today I have the honor of being shadowed for the day by Kimberly Grosse of Omaha, Nebraska. Kim was in foster care for 8 years. Starting off in a group home, she was later placed at Boys Town, where she graduated from high school.

Kim currently works as a communications specialist, dispatching medical EMS helicopters. She also volunteers her time as a court-appointed special advocate for kids currently in the foster care system. Kim, like so many other alumni of the system, pays it forward with her dedicated support. She is a shining example of determination and perseverance in all aspects of her life. I know that this young lady has an extremely bright future ahead.

I also appreciate my colleagues from both sides of the aisle—Representatives KAREN BASS, DIANE BLACK, TRENT FRANKS, JIM LANGEVIN, BRENDA LAWRENCE, and TOM MARINO—for their leadership in the Foster Care Caucus. I am grateful to fellow Members who help advocate for this important cause.

Now, let's continue to embrace the spirit that every child matters and continue to work toward providing all of our sons and daughters an equal opportunity to lead productive and fulfilling lives, not limited to anything but their hopes, dreams, imagination, and perseverance. I salute all of those who are supporters of the foster care system.

I also just want to add, I know, firsthand, when you see your foster children grow to be healthy, successful, independent, and loving adults that you gain a tremendous sense of satisfaction and thankfulness.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BUDGET IS A SHORTSIGHTED PLAN

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

Mr. LAWSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again, President Trump's budget calls for extreme cuts to vital programs that are funding for the Nation's poor, for healthcare, food stamps, student loans, and disability payments. It is a very shortsighted plan that seeks to break the situation that exists for those who can least afford it, while giving tax breaks to the wealthy in our country.

In my district, one in every four Floridians have been on food stamps for some point over the last 12 months. This is twice the national average. It is really unconscionable for the President to propose cutting nutrition benefit programs by $192 billion because that would mean less to those in north Florida who need it the most.

SNAP programs that benefit the needy are so important. We have kids in north Florida, which I have had the personal opportunity to witness, in school programs, and probably the only meal that they are going to get is at school where they come and don't have an opportunity to get another meal at home.

We put hardworking Floridians in a no-win position, having to choose between paying their light bills or affordable healthcare. This is totally unacceptable in America.

This budget calls for slashing $800 billion from Medicaid over the next decade and $72 billion for disability benefits, which are so important. There is no way that we should be encouraging people who are disabled to go out and work to earn their benefits.

Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that almost 40 percent of low-income women in America who are between the age of 15 and 49 years use Medicaid to pay for their healthcare needs?

And in my home State, Florida, 50 percent of those pregnancies are paid for by Medicaid. Who will make up the difference? The need will not magically disappear, as most people think.

This is a shortsighted budget and one that eliminates programs that particularly are geared toward protecting the poor. That is what our job should be in government: to make sure that we protect those and speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

At this time, when we need to be working to make college more affordable and accessible in order to prepare the next generation of tomorrow's leaders, this is counterproductive to be cutting financial assistance to these students.

□ 1045

The President is proposing deep cuts to our Nation's poorest urban and rural communities, which would shrink the supply of affordable housing and increase homelessness and other hardships across this country.

I personally have been touring areas in my district where HUD has failed these communities. The budget continues corporate welfare to Wall Street, and what is so amazing is that Wall Street doesn't receive those cuts. The people who receive the cuts are the ones who need it the most.

An inspiring and most hopeful past President once said that the defining challenge of our time is making sure that our economy works for every working American.

This budget cut does not put us on the path of tackling these challenges. I believe that our Nation's budget should reflect our own values as a society, but it does not align with the values of the Fifth Congressional District, and, therefore, I intend to strongly oppose this budget.

We need to remember that all of the issues we debate on this floor, from healthcare to the President's budget, to America's role in the Middle East, and our borders, foreign policies, those issues have an effect on all of our constituents. While some of our colleagues seem to only want to have political perks, sound bites in the media back home, I implore them to remember this simple fact: The work we do here matters to every person in America, not to just those who vote for us.

It is important that as we approach this budget, Mr. Speaker, that we think about those who are less fortunate.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the statistics of human trafficking, and they are shocking: an estimated 21 million victims globally, a quarter of them children, and the majority of them women, resulting in a $150 billion criminal industry predicated on the destruction of lives.

This criminal conduct may seem a world away, but it is not. It exists right here in our own backyards. Just last year, the human trafficking hotline reported 151 cases of human trafficking in our State of Pennsylvania. This week the House can—and must—act in a bipartisan fashion to support and bolster antihuman trafficking programs, upgrading our Nation's response to this crime.

By empowering nonprofits like NOVA and the Bucks Coalition Against Trafficking, and ensuring our local law enforcement's ability to identify and prosecute those cases, these bills will provide services to victims of human trafficking and aid in apprehending the world's worst offenders.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SHERIFF'S DEPUTY KEITH CLYMER

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Bucks County Sheriff's Deputy Keith Clymer of Kintnersville, who our community lost last week when his motorcycle was struck by another vehicle.

Deputy Clymer joined the Bucks County Sheriff's Office in 2013, and he was assigned to the domestic relations warrant unit. He also served as a self-defense tactics instructor. As the sheriff's office noted in the announcement of his tragedy, Keith was liked by all who met and worked with him and will be sorely missed by all.

Mr. Speaker, the loss of any member of our law enforcement community is heartbreaking, but the loss of Deputy Clymer, as we recognize National Police Week, both here in our Nation's Capital and around my district, draws special focus to those who serve and protect our communities.

My thoughts and prayers are with his sons, his family, and all those who Keith impacted, both personally and professionally. He lived his life serving and protecting us. For that, Mr. Speaker, we are eternally grateful.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Foster Care Month, and I am pleased to welcome Yves Luma and Anabel Sanchez-Senofonte for the Sixth Annual Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day.

I would also salute Congresswoman KAREN BASS, who is the most outspoken, energized advocate for foster youth anywhere in America. I am very proud of Yves and Anabel. They are an inspiration for all of us.

Yves has persisted in the face of true adversity and is now a first-generation college student at Florida State University. She was born in Haiti, faced challenges at a young age that most of us will never understand. Not being able to count on a stable home environment in Haiti, Yves, with her younger siblings, moved around between extended family and friends before moving to the United States.

Once in the United States, Yves did not have a consistent home. Yet through everything, she persevered, working to provide for her younger siblings while continuing her high school education at Plant High School and Blake High School in Tampa. She carried a heavy burden without parents that no child should have to endure. Due to the hard work and help of her school social workers, Yves was referred to Starting Right, Now, a Tampa-based group home for homeless youth who value and desire a higher education. It was this support system and the help of a lot of others that enabled Yves' talent and drive to catapult her to a promising future.

Anabel is 21 years old, also a student at Florida State University, getting a BA in economics and sociology. Anabel grew up in Miami, where she spent most of her life in foster care. She was taken from her mother three times before permanently being removed from her custody. At that point, she entered a group home at about 5 years old. She

went to a number of group homes before moving in with her parents who adopted her.

Foster care was hard because she was separated from her brothers, but she had her sister. But sometimes having that sister around made it tough as well because the sister didn't know how to read and had severe temper tantrums around her foster care parents, and they were usually taken away because of something her little sister did.

So Anabel liked to slide under the radar and focus on school, but she is resilient as well. Now at FSU and working in Tallahassee, she is an Unconquered Scholar. And Unconquered Scholars either have to have experienced homelessness, foster care, or group homes, but now she is on the path to graduate school. And as a lesson for all of us, she advises that: ''I believe that to get the results you want, you must insert yourself into the conversation.'' That is right around here, Anabel, and we look forward to learning a lot from you here today and in the future.

Yves and Anabel are just two of more than 400,000 youth in foster care in America. It is important to recognize the programs, initiatives, and people who contribute to the success of children in the foster care system, but it is tough when they age out.

It is really an honor to have these young people here to shadow us on the Hill today, to share their life experiences directly with Congress, to help inform policy that will help them succeed. Their firsthand knowledge experience, and ultimate success, is a great resource, and the best evidence of our Nation's commitment to providing basic protections to make this the great country that it is.

Every child deserves a safe, supportive family, but when that doesn't happen, it is incumbent upon all of us to help them succeed. And I can't help but think, the day after President Trump submitted a budget, that really will take us backwards, in this case, and we are not going to let that happen. We are going to stand up and support our foster care kids and all children across America, but that budget is not going to be helpful.

In any event, I want to thank Yves and Anabel for joining us today and for having the strength to share their perspectives and insights. Their resiliency is moving, and I hope my colleagues can mirror their bravery and find the will to support capable, bright, young people like Yves and Anabel, and provide them with the tools they need to be successful.

RECOGNIZING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA AND LIEUTENANT WILLIAM E. HALL

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, which took place in May 1942, and the heroic actions of sailors and naval aviators like William E. Hall. The Battle of the Coral Sea was the world's first battle in which aircraft carriers engaged each other; the first sea battle in which neither side could see each other; and the battle that paved the way for the American victory at the Battle of Midway.

With the Japanese fleet moving to strengthen its position in the South Pacific and capture Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, the United States, using intercepted signal intelligence, moved to block the Japanese ships as they crossed the Coral Sea. U.S. Admiral Nimitz ordered two aircraft carriers, the USS *Yorktown* and the USS *Lexington* and a number of smaller warships into the area. For 4 days, the opposing navies deployed aircraft on bombing runs against enemy ships.

On May 7, 1942, Lieutenant Hall flew a SBD Dauntless dive bomber and attacked the Japanese aircraft carrier *Shoho* until it sank. On May 8, Lieutenant Hall defended the USS *Lexington* against a Japanese air force attack. Despite piloting a bomber ill-equipped for aerial combat, and dealing with numerous bullet wounds and shrapnel in his skull, Lieutenant Hall shot down three Japanese planes before landing safely back on the deck of the *Lady Lex*.

When the smoke lifted, more than 650 brave American sailors had died. The enemy destroyed 69 U.S. aircraft. The *Yorktown* was severely disabled, and the USS *Lexington* had to be scuttled after taking critical damage. However, the U.S. forces critically damaged many Japanese ships, forcing them to turn back without capturing Port Moresby.

Furthermore, the loss of two Japanese ships led to a smaller Japanese force at the Battle of Midway, which is considered a key factor for the United States' victory there, and turning the tide of World War II. It is considered by historians to be ''the most stunning and decisive blow in the history of naval warfare.''

For his ''extreme courage, and conspicuous heroism in combat, above and beyond the call of duty as a pilot,'' Lieutenant Hall was presented the United States military's highest honor, the Medal of Honor.

While the original USS *Lexington* ended up on the ocean floor, its legacy lived on in a new aircraft carrier, also named the *Lexington*, which served the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1991. The new *Lexington* now serves as a floating museum in Corpus Christi Bay where visitors can explore and learn about its storied past in conflict zones across the world.

Additionally, Lieutenant Hall's daughter Gwen, a Navy veteran herself, serves as a volunteer on the ship to share the history of its namesake in the Battle of the Coral Sea and her father's action. Now, 75 years later, we remember the historic battle and, more importantly, those who served on the original *Lexington*, fought in the Battle of the Coral Sea, and helped ensure that the Japanese and Axis powers would never overtake the South Pacific.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CALALLEN HIGH SCHOOL'S PHIL DANAHER

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the incredible career of the winningest Texas high school football coach in history, Calallen High School's Phil Danaher.

Coach Danaher was born in Missouri, but his family quickly moved to south Texas. He played football at Harlingen High School before receiving a scholarship to play at Angelo State University.

After graduating in 1971, Coach Danaher became an assistant coach in San Antonio. In 1974, he landed his first head-coaching job in Dilley, Texas, and 4 years later, he moved on to become the head coach at Hamshire-Fannett High School.

In 1984, Coach Danaher took on the challenge of turning around the football program at Calallen High School, which had not reached the playoffs in 28 years. Thirty-three years later, Coach Danaher has led the Wildcats to 32 straight playoff appearances; 19 district championships; 11 trips to the State semifinals; and 2 State championships.

In Coach Danaher's 43 seasons of coaching, his overall record stands at 432 wins, 108 losses, and 4 ties. Coach Danaher's record-breaking success is a testament to his hard work and the thousands of lives he has touched while coaching the Wildcats.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to Coach Danaher, his family, and everyone at Calallen High School.

□ 1100

NATIONAL FOSTER YOUTH MONTH

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

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, May is the month when people come together across the country to acknowledge the half million young people in the Nation's child welfare system. This is National Foster Youth Month.

The child welfare system is designed to protect children whose parents or caretakers have abused or neglected them.

I am proud to say that Members of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth are hosting over 100 young adults from 98 different congressional districts from the National Foster Youth Institute. I thank all of the Members of Congress who are allowing a young adult to shadow them this morning. They are here today on the Hill shadowing Members of Congress to share their stories, their challenges, their successes, and to help us understand how to improve the child welfare system.

On Monday evening, the National Foster Youth Institute had a forum in which we were able to hear from many of the youth. They raised several issues. The young adults have already accomplished a lot in their life, and many are here to learn about the Capitol, their Members of Congress, the legislative process, but also to teach us.

Here are several of the issues that the young folks raised on Monday:

One individual raised the challenge of being raised in the system and being separated from his siblings. He said that he had six siblings, and even had a twin. It was very sad and upsetting to him when his twin was sent to one city and he had to live in another city. It took him many months to reestablish a relationship with his siblings.

Another individual told us about her parents having a drug problem. She didn't understand why she was removed and why her parents weren't helped. In fact, she felt as though the court system used her as leverage over her parents in a way, to tell her parents that they should sober up if they wanted to retain custody. She then told us that the result was both of her parents passed away. She believed that they passed away from their addiction, and that one of the things that made their addiction worse was the fact that she had to be removed from the parents.

Another individual raised the issue of sex trafficking. We have been discussing legislation in the House. We have passed several bills related to sex trafficking. But one of the things that many Members of Congress have grown to be aware of over the last few years is that a large percentage of underage girls, and some boys, who get caught up in sex trafficking are actually foster youth that have fallen through the cracks.

Any time a foster youth falls through the cracks, the government is responsible. When we remove children from their parents, we, meaning the government, become the parents and we are responsible for them. So we are working on legislation to improve that.

Another individual raised the issue that she was adopted, but the adoption didn't work out. She asked: Why don't social workers follow up after a child has been adopted, just to make sure that everything is okay? That adoption didn't work out, and she had a lot of challenges afterwards.

Another individual told us, in no uncertain terms, that, although many young people come to the Capitol and volunteer in internships, foster youth would love to be here and participate in internships as well, but when foster youth turn 18 and become an adult, we—essentially meaning the government again—wash our hands of them and put them out on the street. How can a young person volunteer? They need to be paid. She raised the issue that we should have interns at the Capitol, but they should be paid.

Those were very important issues and they all raise areas of policy that need to be addressed.

I am very honored and fortunate to have three outstanding young individuals with me. I want to tell you about them.

Doniesha Thomas is from Los Angeles. She was in foster care for 20 years. She aged out of the system, but during the time she was in foster care, she was moved seven different times.

She grew up in Los Angeles. She was in a foster home with her sister and brother. She was fortunate that her siblings were able to be kept together. She described her experience in the foster home wasn't the best. She said that, sadly, her foster mother was abusive mentally, physically, and emotionally.

She eventually left the home and then had to move from place to place, but she persevered and is currently a college student at Los Angeles Trade Tech. She is majoring in the administration of justice and minoring in paralegal studies. It is her dream to be a probation officer for juveniles. She also hopes to one day open up a group home so that, growing up in the system and knowing what the problems are, she can start a program where she addresses those problems.

The second individual, Leonardo Jimenez, is 21 years old. He is also from Los Angeles. He was recently aged out of foster care. He decided to participate in the program because, as he gets older, he wants to learn to be a part in helping foster youth in his community.

The last individual is Michael Rogalski. He is from Ohio. He was in foster care for 5 years and had 13 different placements, but he is succeeding in Ohio, working in the area of child support.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we remember the foster youth in our country this month.

HONORING DR. TOD BURNETT ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Dr. Tod Burnett, who is retiring as president of Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, California.

Since 2008, when Dr. Burnett was named the ninth president of Saddleback, he has transformed the college into one of the top higher education institutions in California and the country.

Over the last 9 years, Dr. Burnett established partnerships with local school districts, supported adult education programs, and pioneered the development of comprehensive support services for veterans, Active-Duty military, and their families.

Prior to his time at Saddleback, Dr. Burnett was appointed to several government positions, serving in the administrations of a U.S. President, a Governor, and mayor. He also served as vice chancellor of the California Community Colleges, the largest higher education system in the Nation.

More importantly, Dr. Burnett's involvement in the community outside of work has left a lasting impression on those who know him. He has mentored veterans, personally funded student trips to Washington, and dedicated resources to various programs throughout the region.

Dr. Burnett's generosity and commitment to his community and career has transformed the lives of countless individuals at Saddleback College and throughout Orange County.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Dr. Burnett for his decades of work and dedication to service of the people of California, and I wish him well during his much-deserved retirement.

PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to announce that my foster shadow, Shaderra Riddick, who is a Rutgers student studying anthropology, is with me today in the gallery. I am delighted to have her with me, and I offer these remarks on her behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask a simple question to my colleagues here who support President Trump's budget proposal: What kind of America do you envision?

What kind of America do you envision when you support proposed tax plans that line the pockets of Wall Street investors, yet raise taxes for the working men and women struggling to make ends meet.

What kind of America do you envision when you support rewarding corporations that willfully and admittedly evade American tax laws by stashing profits overseas and, even with proposed tax amenities, still punish their rank-and-file employees that can't save because they are paid below a living wage?

What kind of America do you envision when you proudly support the elimination of Federal agencies that protect our workers from discrimination or subject our children to an environment that is unhealthy and harmful to their health?

The President's budget proposal released yesterday is built on heartless cuts to Medicaid; SNAP; Social Security disability insurance benefits; additional income for poor seniors, disabled adults, and children; and public assistance for needy families.

It threatens regular Americans' ability to buy a home and the ability for that home to even be an investment worth the risk.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, this budget is the latest in a series of actions that begs

the question: What kind of America do my Republican colleagues and the President envision for our future? One where the investor class thrives, but the majority of working-class Americans suffer? One where our environment provides temporary profits, but irreparable harm? One where we make a promise to seniors while they work hard to build and sustain our economy, but, upon retirement, snatch away their investments, along with any safety net?

Mr. Speaker, I envision a different America. I envision an America where an honest day's work, no matter where you clock in, deserves a living wage. I envision an America where my granddaughter, Kamryn, will make the same amount as your grandson for the same work. I envision an America where we double down on our investment in public education, and where we double down on our investment in this country's future. I envision a country where commonsense gun legislation limits the opportunity for tragedy to strike in our schools and churches at the hands of hatred and bigotry.

The America I am working toward is an America that celebrates the richness of our diversity, seeks to right past wrongs, an America to be envied.

Mr. Speaker, I refuse to concede that we were too divided along this aisle that we can't create new, good-paying jobs, educate our kids, train our workers, create jobs for those workers, and create an America ripe with new opportunity for all.

Mr. Speaker, the America I envision, the America I believe in, the America that we deserve is within our reach. Unfortunately, that America is threatened, ignored, and displaced with this President's budget proposal.

So, again, I ask this question of the President and of my Republican colleagues who will support this callous and shameful budget proposal: What kind of America do you envision, and when will you stand up and fight for the America we all deserve?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and that it is not in order to introduce occupants in the gallery to the House.

BIG BANK BAILOUTS

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, in my 29 years in Congress, the issue on which I heard the most from constituents in the shortest time was on the big bank bailouts of several years ago.

When that was before us, I received 6,600 emails in one weekend just in my Washington office from Friday, when the office closed, until Monday, when we opened back up. This, of course, was in addition to the many thousands of phone calls, letters, and emails that came in during the week before and the week after.

I opposed that big bank bailout, but, of course, extremely big business won again and the Congress voted for the bailout.

Three years ago, in 2014, I wrote the following in a newsletter to my 760,000 constituents:

''A few weeks ago, George Mason University released a report saying that 'since the financial crisis, U.S. banking assets and deposits have continued to consolidate in a handful of large banks.' The five largest banks now hold 44 percent of U.S. banking assets compared to 23.5 percent in early 2000. Liberals in Congress passed the Dodd-Frank law, which I opposed, supposedly to get back at the banks that caused our most recent financial troubles. The George Mason report also said the Dodd-Frank law is 'disproportionately burdensome to small banks' and 'creates a market expectation that designated firms are too big to fail.' Columnist Veronique de Rugy wrote that 'the number of small banks has dropped dramatically over the years,' and this has been 'driven by regulatory burdens that make it hard and expensive for small banks to survive.' I have been told by several east Tennessee bankers that, unfortunately, their fastest-growing departments have been their regulatory compliance sections. The more any business or industry comes under Federal regulation, the more it ends up being dominated by extremely big business.''

Now, to update what I wrote in 2014. According to the Congressional Research Service, 1,744 banks have ceased to exist since the passage of Dodd-Frank. Many of those have been forced to merge with a bigger bank because they simply were not able to keep up with all the rules, regulations, and red tape of Dodd-Frank and the resulting compliance costs.

□ 1115

Even worse, 203 small banks have failed—been forced out of business by Big Government—with a resulting huge loss of jobs and lost investment by stockholders. In addition, nationally, 160 credit unions have closed. Either they failed or were forced to consolidate with a bigger credit union. Thus, Dodd-Frank, as most Federal regulatory legislation, ended up helping the big giants and hurting the little guys—the smallest banks and credit unions.

In a study by Hester Peirce and Robert Greene, the authors wrote: ''Regulatory compliance can be a particular challenge for small banks with limited compliance expertise. Regulatory expenses absorb a larger percentage of small banks' budgets than of their larger counterparts' budgets. As financial regulation has increased, so has banking concentration. The Dodd-Frank Act, passed in 2010, imposes a new set of regulations that are disproportionately burdensome to small banks. Moreover, by designating the largest financial institutions as 'systemically important,' Dodd-Frank creates a market expectation that designated firms are too big to fail and generates funding and other competitive advantages for the largest U.S. banks.''

Liberals, Madam Speaker, often claim that they are for the little guys, and most Federal laws are well intended. But there is a saying to ''beware of the tyranny of good intentions.'' Every industry that is highly federally regulated almost ends up in the hands of a few big giants.

Federal regulators should start trying to help out the smallest business instead of always ending up helping extremely big business. That is something that happens in almost every business and industry in this country, and it needs to be reversed.

REMEMBERING RICHARD WILBUR COLLINS III

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Madam Speaker, Richard Wilbur Collins III was ready to graduate from Bowie State University yesterday. He just finished Army ROTC, was airborne qualified, and was just commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Army's intelligence branch. His father is a Navy veteran, and Richard wanted to follow in his footsteps and commit his life to serving our Nation. He was ambitious and driven. His calling was to protect our country and to do what is right and just.

He loved soccer and lacrosse. He was the top runner in his ROTC unit. His Facebook page was filled with selfies with his friends. He was active in his church. His friends and family said that he had a loving and giving heart and would go out of his way to try and help others.

On Saturday morning, while waiting for an Uber ride with two friends at the University of Maryland, he was approached by another student who demanded that he ''Step left. Step left if you know what is best for you.'' Richard simply replied, ''no.'' The other student stabbed him in the chest and fled. Richard died in the hospital. His bright future was stolen. His parents were robbed of their son. Our hearts are broken.

This tragedy exposes a dangerous rising tide. This incident was not some random act of violence. It was a heinous, despicable, and unprovoked crime of hate.

Richard Collins' murderer—who was from a middle class family, who hung out at the student union and library—was a member of a racist neo-Nazi group called Alt-Reich Nation. He was not some outsider. He was a homegrown terrorist who was radicalized on the university campus.

What is most troubling is this isn't the first incident of hate at the University of Maryland. This academic year

alone, there have been anti-immigrant chalkings, racist fliers, threats, and, less than a month ago, there was a noose found inside a campus fraternity house.

But this isn't just a troubling trend at the University of Maryland. There has been an unprecedented spike in racist and hate activity on campuses since November. Posters at the University of Texas implored students to report any and all illegal aliens, that America is a White nation. Another flier, with swastikas, at UCLA read, in part: ''the hordes of our enemies from the Blacks to the Jews are deserving of fates of violence.''

Hate watch groups have tracked 150 racist incidents on college campuses in 33 States since the fall. Just a year ago, it was such a rarity that no one was even counting.

Peddlers of hate are specifically targeting college campuses, declaring that their time has come, and trying to lure students with slogans like ''serve your people'' and ''our destiny is ours.'' They are working to translate their online activism to real-world action, and young people are prime targets, in part, because they are still figuring out who they are and what they believe.

One would have to be purposefully obtuse to not see a direct line from the recent elections to the emboldening of these perpetrators across the country. Longtime White supremacist Jared Taylor described the November election result as a ''sign of rising White consciousness'' and that ''now is the time to press our advantage in every way possible.''

So, today, I am calling on the administration—that has repeatedly failed to denounce the hate crimes directed at Jews, members of the LGBT community, or immigrants—to denounce the hate-fueled killing of a Black soldier, Second Lieutenant Richard Collins.

The reaction to Collins' murder is often formulaic. We extend our condolences and sympathies, call the killing a senseless tragedy, and proclaim that we won't tolerate these incidents. That is not good enough. If this escalation of hate is going to end in Maryland and across the country, it will be because all of us take a stand not only against the hard right and hate festering on campus, but to leaders who have been too content to remain silent and look the other way.

Hate speech is not protected. Encouraging open academic debate cannot lead to inaction that creates a breeding ground for prejudice, discrimination, and violent hatred on our college campuses or anywhere.

Campuses should adopt successful strategies:

Consider zero-tolerance policies for hateful speech and acts of racism. Maybe if students know that they will be expelled for spreading racial slurs online, they will think twice;

Replicate the University of Massachusetts. They have a hate SWAT team that counters hateful messages through an early alert system, a counter-messaging response team, and counselors on call;

Or promote more diverse voices in the faculty and staff.

Pretending that the murder of Richard Collins in cold blood is an isolated incident will only make the situation worse. Diversity and unity—that American melting pot that is the foundation of our Nation—can only happen when the country does a better job confronting hate in all forms. We cannot simply start when students arrive on campus.

In the absence of real change, we take to the streets; we protest; we hold vigils. But Richard Collins deserves better. Our children deserve better. Let us work together, and let's not wait for another tragedy.

Farewell and Godspeed, Lieutenant Collins.

A CALL TO NATIONAL SERVICE

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, while I put up a couple of charts here, the most noticeable one is I want to make everybody aware that tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. we will unveil ACTION, a call to national service. It will be carried live streaming on YouTube tomorrow morning, May 25, at 9 a.m.

The first poster that I have up here is of General McChrystal. Tomorrow morning, JOHN LEWIS, DORIS MATSUI, JOE KENNEDY, our Senate lead Senator JACK REED from Rhode Island, and General McChrystal, among others, will be at our bill introduction and rollout.

General McChrystal has said that we need to create a culture of service, where we are all vested in our Nation's future and feel a shared sense of responsibility not only to our Nation, but to each other.

General McChrystal also said, as was outlined in The Atlantic Monthly, that you don't have to wear a military uniform to serve your country. But certainly wearing a military uniform in serving your country is an honor, and we commend those men and women who serve for what they do for our country. But many among them, including reservists and the National Guard, are not often eligible for the GI Bill, yet they have done tours of duty and served their Nation extraordinarily well.

This Monday, Memorial Day, would be the 100th birthday of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. It is hard to believe that so youthful, so vital, so gracious, so eloquent, and so charismatic a leader was taken from us at such a young age. Yet it was he who gave us this great vision when, in his inaugural address, he said to the citizens of this country: ''In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround this globe.

''Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, 'rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation'—a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.''

Kennedy was speaking of the Nation when he said: ''Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind?''

Then he said to all Americans: ''Will you join in that historic effort?''

''And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.''

What we propose in this legislation tomorrow we are rolling out is that what you can do for your country is serve it. Whether in the military, the Reserves, or the National Guard, or whether in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, or VISTA, you can serve your country; and what your country can do for you in return is to help you get through college and pay off your debt that you have incurred.

Rise with us, America, and join us tomorrow as we go on the march and make sure that, in the legacy of President Kennedy, we continue to move this Nation forward.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 29 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

Pastor Becky Tirabassi, Viewpoint Church, Newport Beach, California, offered the following prayer:

Father, I pray for the immediate outpouring of Your Holy Spirit on our Nation and leaders.

I pray that not one of us will miss hearing Your voice today.

I pray that we would not neglect to ask for Your wisdom.

I pray that we would not make decisions without asking Your guidance.

Will You go before and behind us?

Will You give us our marching orders?

In this hour of our great need, begin again to help us, as You have in years gone by.

Father, You are the God who does immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine.

Today, give us the humility to ask for Your help, and the grand moral courage to be agents of change for the good of others and the honor of Your name.

In Your powerful name we ask these things.

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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. CONNOLLY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING PASTOR BECKY TIRABASSI

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor today to introduce to the House our guest chaplain, Becky Tirabassi, co-pastor of the Viewpoint Church in Newport Beach, California.

Becky became a licensed pastor in 2014, when she and her husband, Dr. Roger Tirabassi, founded the Viewpoint Church. Today, she and her husband give spiritual guidance and personal counseling to members of the Viewpoint Church, but also to people throughout Orange County needing personal and spiritual encouragement.

Becky was helping others even before she became a pastor. She is best known as an author of over 15 books, including the best-selling books, ''Change Your Life'' and ''Little Changes Big Results for Crazy, Busy Couples.'' She has appeared many times on national television and radio, and for over three decades has spoken before groups in nearly all 50 States, as well as internationally. In addition to her co-pastorate, she is president of the Becky Tirabassi Change Your Life, Incorporated.

Becky and Roger have one married son, who is a grown man, and he has just completed a tour as a missionary in Uganda. For that safe return, we are all grateful.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming Pastor Becky Tirabassi, and thank her for offering today's opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE.

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

RECOGNIZING DR. DAVID RAINES

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today alongside my good friend, Congressman MIKE JOHNSON, to recognize Dr. David Raines, a Louisiana legend in the field of gastroenterology.

Dr. Raines has worked with patients across the United States, including a gastroenterology fellowship serving our Nation's veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center here in Washington.

Dr. Raines is a pioneer in the field of gastroenterology, and is almost single-handedly responsible for bringing free-standing endoscopy centers to Louisiana. Because of him, patients can get these important lifesaving procedures in cost-efficient and convenient outpatient facilities.

Dr. Raines is admired among his peers, me being one of those and Congressman JOHNSON being another, not only for his professional accomplishments, but also for the way he has cared for others, including mentoring new doctors attending and entering his field.

Congressman JOHNSON and I wanted to take a moment today to thank Dr. Raines for his career of service to patients throughout Louisiana. He has saved many lives, and our State is a better place because of him.

TRUMP BUDGET AND RURAL AMERICA

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, President Trump released his budget. And what he has shown is that rural America is just about at the bottom of his list.

His budget is a killer for the Department of Agriculture. The cuts to the rural development program would mean fewer jobs in small towns that are already struggling.

While he promised to ''end the war on the family farmer,'' President Trump slashes funding for the crop insurance program. And in Peoria, his budget would even close the Nation's largest agricultural research lab, a place for ag innovation that is part of the solution for renewed ag economy.

Time and time again, President Trump made a great big promise spelled out on his red ball cap. Now I am left wondering how a budget that would devastate Main Street and our family farmers would make anything great again.

Mr. President, middle America is not just flyover country. We value those who look us in the eye, tell us the truth, and then do what they say they are going to do.

So, President Trump, I ask you: Does your budget live up to what you spelled out on your ball cap?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

CONGRATULATING ANNIE RICHARDSON

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to express appreciation for Annie Richardson, press assistant of South Carolina's Second Congressional District.

A native of Alexandria, Virginia, Annie has called South Carolina's Second Congressional District home since 2004. A distinguished graduate of Hammond School and Presbyterian College, Annie has faithfully served on the staff of the Second Congressional District. Her expertise in photography, graphic design, and videography has made a positive difference, and her sunny disposition is always recognized by constituents visiting the office.

It is with mixed blessings, but great happiness, that I bid Annie farewell. She is moving on next week to serve as the digital assistant for the House Republican Conference; fortunately, to be working with conference chair CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS. I know she will do a remarkable job supporting the conference.

I know her father, Phil, and brother, Emmett, join me in recognizing her achievements. She has served with distinction in the tradition of her late beloved mother, Holly Richardson, who will always be cherished as a devoted staff member of Senate President pro tempore Strom Thurmond.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

We are grateful for the visit today in Washington of Medal of Honor recipient James Livingston, a Marine general from Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to demand that Congress get serious about the Russia investigation.

In December, along with Mr. ENGEL of New York, I introduced the SECURE Our Democracy Act that would sanction any foreign individual or entity found to have unlawfully interfered with our election process. That shouldn't be a partisan issue, yet all of the bill's 88 cosponsors are Democrats.

I am also a cosponsor of the Protecting Our Democracy Act to establish an independent commission to get to the bottom of the Russia investigation.

A recent NBC-Wall Street Journal poll conducted in April found that 73 percent of our fellow Americans want such an independent commission. They want to get at the truth. So do I. So should all of us. I have signed a discharge petition to get that bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support these two measures, and to bring them to the floor for consideration. It is our constitutional duty to provide oversight of any executive in any executive branch.

The American people demand answers and accountability, not obstruction and intimidation. Appointing a special counsel, independent of the White House and the Attorney General, was one way to begin to restore credibility that has been badly tarnished. I urge us to proceed with the Russia investigation with all dispatch.

FOSTER YOUTH SHADOW DAY

(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 acknowledge the struggles that foster youth encounter, and to celebrate their perseverance and fortitude as they attempt to navigate this complicated system and transition to adulthood.

In Arkansas, we have over 5,000 children currently in the State's foster care system.

I am proud to work with my colleagues on the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth to shed light on the perpetuation of poverty and dysfunction our current system enables. And I stand proudly in support of House Resolution 314, recognizing May as National Foster Care Month.

For the past 2 years, I have had the opportunity to have a former foster youth personally shadow me for a day. What a rewarding experience.

This year, I am honored to host Starr Wilson, a former foster youth from my district. After spending 10 years in foster care, Starr, who is full of drive and passion, graduated with honors from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

Unlike Starr's story, though, when many youth across America age out of the system, they find themselves with no place to call home, and they lack the encouragement and structure they need to pursue happiness.

Therefore, I am proud to stand with the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth in praise of the Sixth Annual Foster Youth Shadow Day here on Capitol Hill, which allows these youth to come across our country and share time with Members of Congress, and aspire to be the leaders of generations to come.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I am going to follow up on the prior speaker. I rise in support of National Foster Care Month. This month, we renew our commitment to ensuring that the 420,000 youth who are in our Nation's foster care system have a caring family and the opportunities they deserve.

I am proud to be a member of the Foster Youth Caucus, which is devoted to highlighting the efforts of all those involved with improving our Nation's foster care system.

I also rise to celebrate Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day. Today, more than 100 former foster youth from across the country are in D.C., paired with Members of Congress as we conduct the Nation's business.

I am privileged to host Shantell House and Jeremiah McWright from California. Shantell is currently a student at Mills College and is passionate about current and former foster youth. Jeremiah joins me from San Diego, where he is studying public policy and has the potential to become a great business leader, or even a politician.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Shantell and Jeremiah, along with all of the participants of the Congressional Youth Shadow Day, to our Nation's capital.

RECOGNIZING BRITNI BURLINGHAM

(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 as a proud member of the Foster Youth Caucus, and also as part of a family that was involved in the foster care system.

Today I have the opportunity to spend time with Britni Burlingham as part of the Annual Foster Youth Shadow Day.

Britni is a social work major at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania. She is also a case aide for the Bair Foundation, a nonprofit organization that focuses on foster care and adoption.

This profession is rewarding for Britni because she has a firsthand experience. She entered the foster care system when she was just 7 years old.

Britni has said that being able to work with children who have had similar experiences to hers is life-changing. She and her husband also provide a loving home to their two foster daughters.

I am grateful that I can spend time today with Britni and hear about her positive experience with foster care. Her adoptive family built a strong foundation for her to achieve success in her own life.

Mr. Speaker, this is what foster care is all about.

I thank Britni for being here today, sharing her story and helping so many children overcome similar obstacles.

Congratulations, Britni. We are all very proud of your success.

□ 1215

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL BAHAR

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Michael Bahar, who will be leaving the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where he has served as general counsel since September 2012, and as staff director and general counsel since early 2015.

Because of Michael's commitment to always finding a way to ''yes,'' he has helped guide HPSCI to a run of remarkable legislative success over the past 2 years. In a city of tacticians, Michael's great gift is his ability to look at things strategically, even while reacting in real time to emerging matters at hand.

Under Michael's leadership of the HPSCI Democratic staff, we have passed two successive bipartisan intelligence authorization acts, both of which received multiple and successively larger vote tallies each time they came to the floor.

In June 2015, we passed the USA FREEDOM Act that ended bulk collection of telephony metadata under section 215 of the PATRIOT Act, replacing it with a new regime more protective of Americans' privacy.

And later in 2015, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 was included as part of the 2016 omnibus spending bill. CISA, which encourages businesses and the Federal Government to share cyber threat information in the interest of national security, could not have been timelier.

Neither bill would have been possible without Michael's tireless efforts. He worked on a broad range of issues with a broad range of stakeholders, in and out of government, and these measures were necessary and effective in securing our liberties.

Prior to joining the committee, Michael served with dedication in the Obama White House as Deputy Legal Adviser to the National Security Council staff. He is a Naval reservist supporting U.S. Special Operations Command.

After a well-deserved vacation, Michael will embark on a new career as a

lawyer here in D.C. On behalf of the entire HPSCI family, I want to wish Michael, his wife, Hannah, and their daughter, Rose, the very best, and thank him for his years of service to the Nation.

CONGRATULATING AND HONORING MIKE FREMONT

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor a great Cincinnatian and avid marathoner, Mike Fremont, for accomplishing something pretty amazing. A little over a week ago, Mike set the world record for his age group at Cincinnati's Flying Pig Half-Marathon.

By the way, he is 95 years old. Thirteen miles at the age of 95. And he had previously held the world record for a 90-year-old marathoner, which he set 5 years ago in Huntington, West Virginia.

Mike's passion for running and a healthy lifestyle kicked in when he was only 70 years old and given only 3 months to live after being diagnosed with an advanced form of cancer.

I have known Mike since my time on the Cincinnati City Council back 30 years ago, including involvement with the Mill Creek Restoration Project. He is an amazing Cincinnatian and ought to be an inspiration to all who hear of his accomplishments.

Congratulations, Mike. You have made all Cincinnatians proud.

DISCLOSURE OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the President recently disclosed highly sensitive information to Russian officials, information that had been entrusted to the United States by an ally. This incident has generated concern among national security professionals.

Under current law, the President must keep the congressional intelligence committees informed of U.S. intelligence activities. Building on this general mandate, I am filing a bill that would require the President to notify the intelligence committees when a U.S. official, including the President, intentionally or inadvertently discloses top-secret information to a nation that sponsors terrorism or, like Russia, is subject to U.S. sanctions.

My bill would deter unjustified disclosure of sensitive information to adversaries. It would also give the congressional intelligence committees an opportunity to examine the rationale for the disclosure, to assess any fallout, and to take appropriate action.

My bill would simply provide Congress with the same information that was made available to other nations. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support this bill.

REFLECTIONS ON MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reflect on what Memorial Day means to our country. Memorial Day truly is a special occasion in which we honor the brave men and women in uniform who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Many from the Volunteer State died on the battlefield to defend our Nation. Because of them, and so many others from across our Nation, we enjoy our freedoms and many blessings. The debt we owe them is immeasurable.

But we can honor their memory and make life easier for families of fallen heroes like Lance Corporal Andrew P. Carpenter, from Columbia, Tennessee, who died fighting in Afghanistan. Although his loan provider forgave his student loan debt, Andrew's family owed taxes on the discharged amount. I introduced the Tax Relief for Our Nation's Heroes Act to resolve this IRS oversight.

Military families should have more peace of mind, which is part of my job on the House Armed Services Committee.

I would like to thank all those who have worn the uniform of the U.S. military, and offer my prayers for the safety of thousands now serving in harm's way.

SALUTING FALLEN VETERANS ON MEMORIAL DAY

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my family and staff, I want to salute and commemorate the fallen veterans of the United States Virgin Islands and throughout the United States as we prepare to celebrate or participate in this Memorial Day observance.

Memorial Day is the day our Nation gathers to honor the many men and women who have selflessly defended this country and have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the public and our democratic principles.

The Virgin Islands proudly served and sacrificed its sons and daughters to American freedom, even before it was a part of this Nation. Our service history is rich and will continue. After becoming a part of this country 100 years ago this year, we lobbied, petitioned, for the responsibility to be a part of the draft. We shirk not from our duty.

The Virgin Islands, along with the other territories, send more men and women per capita to serve in the U.S. military than anywhere in the United States, and have more fallen veterans per capita than anywhere else.

I take this opportunity to thank and extend condolences to these men and women, their families, for their bravery, strength, sacrifice, and courage. We as citizens, and as a community, are forever indebted to our servicemen and -women. Our resolve is that their sacrifice is not in vain as we continue to fight for liberty and justice for all, both home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, just as we vow to leave no soldier behind on the battlefield, we here in Congress will not forget any veterans when they return home.

MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, America pauses to honor the patriotic men and women who sacrificed their lives in support of our liberty.

For many, perhaps, Memorial Day has become just another reason for a cookout. But for more than 11,000 families in North Carolina, Memorial Day is very real. Their son or daughter or spouse or parent is among the 11,000 North Carolinians who died during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, or Afghanistan.

Remembering the price of freedom makes me all the more grateful for the 17 students from my district who this year received appointments to West Point, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the U.S. Naval Academy. These students, many of them at or near the top of their class, are volunteering to dedicate at least 9 years to defend America. They know the potential risks and the ultimate sacrifice required by many.

To the families of those who died in service to our Nation, we extend our deepest sympathy and gratitude. May God bless you.

HONORING REVEREND DR. WILLIAM J. BARBER II

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

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, Walter Lippmann once said that ''The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will carry on.''

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great leader, the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II. As the president of North Carolina's chapter of the NAACP, Reverend Barber has become a national icon and a champion of moral leadership. He is the founder of Moral Mondays. He has traveled to more than 20 States to train others on tactics in civil disobedience.

And under his leadership, the NAACP fiercely fought against discriminatory legislation such as North Carolina's HB2 and voter suppression tactics like voter ID laws.

After 12 years as president of the North Carolina NAACP, Reverend Barber is retiring to lead a new campaign—a national call for a moral revival. This new coalition of spiritual leaders will push beyond politics to guide our Nation toward a path of increased equality and social justice.

Reverend Barber's leadership of the NAACP will be sorely missed, but I look forward to witnessing the many ways in which he will continue to impact lives and make America a more just and fair place.

Thank you, Reverend Barber. Godspeed.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAVE SHAUL

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of one of Illinois' great journalists, Dave Shaul, who passed away this month at age 75.

For decades, Dave provided countless central Illinois residents with their local news as an anchor, producer, and news director at WCIA in Champaign, Illinois. During his storied television and radio broadcast career, Dave covered the biggest local, State, and national news, including covering every Presidential election from 1964 through 2016. Dave was known for his honest and trustworthy coverage of local and national politics.

Dave won a number of awards during his career as a journalist. In 1980, he won the UPI Best Television Sports Play-by-Play Award for his coverage of Illinois basketball. And in 1999, he was honored with the Associated Press Mark Twain Lifetime Achievement Award, was named to the Eastern Illinois University Hall of Fame, and was designated a lifetime member of the Illinois News Broadcasters Association. Dave also received an Emmy Award for his career accomplishments in 2011.

Dave leaves a long legacy as a trusted figure on the news and in the Champaign-Urbana community. His family and friends continue to be in my thoughts and prayers.

MEDIA TARGET 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, from a recent Investor's Business Daily editorial, a Harvard University study found that ''During the first 100 days of Trump's Presidency, TV networks CNN, NBC, and CBS provided negative coverage 93 percent, 93 percent, and 91 percent of the time.''

Meanwhile, ''The New York Times delivered 87 percent negative coverage, while The Washington Post 83 percent and The Wall Street Journal 70 percent were only a bit less negative.''

''Trump's overall score of 80 percent negative coverage during the start of his Presidency compares with Obama's 41 percent, Bush's 57 percent, and Bill Clinton's 60 percent.''

''Both the Post and the Times, for instance, have used unnamed sources and even the supposed content of documents that they have never viewed as the basis for major revelations about Trump in recent days. They have let their raw hatred get the better of them.

''Such a media environment is dangerous for American democracy.''

Expecting basic professionalism from the media, sadly, seems to be too much.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 24, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 24, 2017, at 9:04 a.m.:

Appointments:
Election Assistance Board of Advisors.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1973, PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1761, PROTECTING AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2017; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MAY 26, 2017, THROUGH JUNE 5, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 352 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 352

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and amendments specified in this section and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-20. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1761) to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-19 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; (2) the further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. On any legislative day during the period from May 26, 2017, through June 5, 2017—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time,

within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 4. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 3 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

□ 1230

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the underlying legislation. This rule provides a structured process for debate. I want to highlight that this rule makes in order all amendments submitted to the Rules Committee, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, all of us in this Chamber today support the goals of this legislation. We can and we must do more to protect children from the plague of sexual assault and the prevalence of child pornography permeating society today.

I am particularly glad to see such bipartisan support for H.R. 1973. The young athletes that represent the United States on the world's stage at the Olympics must not be taken advantage of by predatory coaches and doctors who should be mentoring them. In fact, no child anywhere should be taken advantage of; but this bill makes some commonsense changes that strengthen the reporting of abuse and puts in place policies that prevent future violations, and I am hopeful it will become law.

It staggers the mind to believe that this assault on those children had gone on for 20 years, and some 400 children were victimized for it, and not a single adult anywhere around ever brought attention to it. In fact, we owe a great newspaper in Indiana for telling us about it, so be sure to read a good newspaper every day.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of agreement about the goals of the bills before us today, but that wasn't the case 20 days ago when the majority rushed through its partisan, slapdash healthcare bill repeal to rip away healthcare from millions of people. They passed the bill without holding a single hearing, listening to any experts, or, most importantly, waiting for a score from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

The Congressional Budget Office tells us what the bill will cost, how many people it will help, how many people it would hurt, something that, with healthcare, would have been vitally important.

But while the lack of a score didn't prohibit them from holding a vote, it did, apparently, prevent the majority from sending the bill over to the Senate. Mr. Speaker, this process is completely backwards and a major breakdown of the integrity of the legislative process.

Most schoolchildren know that, when a bill passes the House, you send it to the Senate. You don't hide it in a drawer for weeks until you finally get the information from the Congressional Budget Office that you should have had before you brought the bill to the floor for a vote.

This is no way to develop a plan that will impact one-sixth of the Nation's gross domestic product, and the process has finally laid bare one of the biggest political hoaxes in recent memory: that notion of repeal and replace. How often did we hear that over the last 7 years?

For the last 7 years, the majority voted more than 60 times to undermine the Affordable Care Act without having a thing in the world to replace it with, and now they are pushing the false notion that the Affordable Care Act is collapsing. The reality is that some States dealing with limited insurers never implemented the full benefits of the law or enacted the exchange under the Affordable Care Act, which would have cut their costs.

Mr. Speaker, one of my proudest moments as a Member of Congress was chairing the House Rules Committee and bringing the Affordable Care Act to the House floor. Almost every President since Theodore Roosevelt had attempted to give healthcare to the American people. Millions of people are now waking up to the benefits of this healthcare, and our Nation's uninsured rate is at its lowest level in more than 50 years. Why would you rip that away?

For the first time in a generation, we are actually slowing the yearly growth of healthcare costs. A poll released just this last month found that 61 percent of the public supports keeping and improving the Affordable Care Act. That is in stark contrast to the 17 percent approval rating for the repeal bill that was voted on here several weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, I wish the majority would stop turning a deaf ear to the people it represents. The American people have been marching and calling and writing against this bill in numbers none of us have ever seen before. A bad process led to a bad product.

Mr. Speaker, none of us believe that the ACA was perfect. I urge the majority to take the bill out of the drawer and shred it. Let's get together, strengthen our healthcare system and the Affordable Care Act. It is exactly what our constituents deserve.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS).

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time, and I am grateful to be here with the gentleman. I want to speak to both of these bills rather than speaking to a different bill that was considered in this body.

With regard to H.R. 1761, this bill became necessary because of the court-imposed misinterpretation of a congressional statute with regard to the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a victim of child abuse, or sexually explicit conduct. This is important because it closes a loophole that otherwise would allow a perpetrator to walk free because of a lack of specific intent when recording images of the victim that they are victimizing.

This bill is important because it closes the loophole and gets back to what the intent of Congress was when they passed legislation intended to protect children and criminalized the production of images of child sexual abuse. This bill does all we can at this point to protect our children from sexual predators.

It is a moral necessity that we close this shameful loophole, created by a judicial opinion, to provide the appropriate punishment to those who look to harm minors. It won't protect all of our children, but it will provide a significant deterrent to protect more of our children, and that makes this bill important, crucial, and necessary.

With regard to H.R. 1973, Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017, this broadens the coverage of current laws that require reporting of child abuse, specifically with regard to those children who are participating in organizations that are organized for the purpose of helping—ostensibly helping—young athletes train for international competition.

When you are a parent of an athlete, just like your child, you trust these coaches who are mentoring and working and interacting with your children not just for training these children and preparing them to be the best athlete they possibly can be, but you also entrust, many times, your children's keeping to them.

Gone are the days where kids were playing in Little League and saw their coaches for brief periods of time. In many instances, the children that will be protected by this bill are those elite young athletes who spend quite a bit of time actually away from their parents and in the care and custody of coaches, trainers, and other people associated with the program.

As a father of athletes, it is important that I be able to trust that, if someone has been convicted or has had to report that, that information is available. And due to this particular

legislation, the government will now be able to pursue cases that it would not otherwise be able to prosecute.

This legislation specifies that national governing bodies are authorized to develop training oversight practices, policies, and procedures to prevent sexual abuse of amateur athletes. And then what is critical, it requires that it is necessary to assure child abuse is being reported by those who work with amateur athletes. Those reporting requirements are essential protective deterrences and provide assurances to all surrounding that young child and that athlete that they have the opportunity for safekeeping.

Organizations must be taking action against coaches or other members when allegations are made against them to assure young athletes are kept safe. The safety of these young athletes must trump, in many cases, perhaps, their ability to develop their unique gifts and talents.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that these bills are brought forward, and I support them.

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

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

Nearly 30 years ago, I held my son, Cody, for the first time. A couple of years later, I held my daughter, Kaitlin. I knew right then that these two children were the most important and cherished things in my life. They deserve the happiest childhood and the brightest future and the safest world.

I imagine anyone who holds their child for the first time has the same thought. Until you become a parent, it is hard to describe the love you have for your children.

□ 1245

Mr. Speaker, that someone would hurt a child simply perplexes me. Children are the most vulnerable, the most innocent in our society. They, most of all, don't deserve the trauma and pain that accompany abuse. They don't deserve to have their trust in adults or their trust in the world shattered at such a young age. They don't deserve the ghosts of suffering that accompany abuse victims for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, to commit a crime against children is to engage in the greatest of evils. It is to violate our moral order in the most egregious of ways. Our job in Congress is to debate and maintain that moral order. Thankfully, everyone in this Chamber can agree on the moral imperative to protect children.

Our job today is to uphold our values through well-crafted legislation. We are here today to pass laws that uphold our belief in the sanctity of innocence. We are here today for our children.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1973, the first bill in this rule resolution, strengthens the laws protecting child athletes. The bill requires coaches and adults involved with amateur sports organizations overseen by the U.S. Olympic Committee to report suspected child abuse to local and Federal authorities.

Unfortunately, reporting isn't always the standard under current law. Over the past 20 years, around 368 individuals affiliated with USA Gymnastics faced sexual abuse by adults affiliated with the organization, according to The Indianapolis Star. Sadly, some of the victims never saw justice. Their allegations remained unresolved, sometimes because coaches moved from State to State to avoid investigation.

H.R. 1973 pulls additional adults into the mandatory reporting category, ensuring that those adults working with minors under the U.S. Olympic Committee's jurisdiction must report instances of child abuse to local and Federal authorities.

It further clarifies the sexual abuse reporting duties of national governing bodies, or NGBs. These organizations, supervised by the U.S. Olympic Committee, manage amateur athletic competitions.

We need to promote a culture of reporting sexual assault among youth athletes. That culture needs to overflow into all parts of our society.

We are not suggesting we toss out due process for the accused. The legislation at hand only requires the reporting and investigation of sexual abuse of children. Additionally, H.R. 1973 makes stronger the civil remedies that victims of sexual abuse may pursue.

Mr. Speaker, the other legislation under this rule, H.R. 1761, goes after those who create child pornography. Just to utter those words is unbearable, but our job in Congress is to stop the unbearable.

Under current law and due to the impact of the court ruling in United States v. Palomino-Coronado, perpetrators of child pornography can sometimes evade prosecution for child pornography under a loophole. Under the precedent set in the case, even if perpetrators memorialize the sexual abuse of a child through images and video, they do not necessarily possess the intent or purpose to sexually abuse children in order to take a picture. In other words, they didn't intend to violate title 18 of the U.S. Code, section 2251, which prohibits child pornography.

We need to close this loophole. If evildoers are sexually abusing our children and photographing or filming it, they should be going to prison for a long time. This loophole was carved out by the judicial branch. It is time for the legislative branch to step in and tighten the statutory language to prevent the exploitation of this loophole and to prevent the exploitation of our children.

The bills under consideration today serve two purposes. First and foremost, they provide a deterrent to criminals who would consider harming a child.

We can't preemptively stop everyone who plans to commit a crime against a child, which is why we must deter them with the threat of discovery, conviction, and jail time.

These bills very practically make the exploitation of a child harder to get away with. They commission more well-meaning adults to be on guard against the occurrence of sexual abuse. They allow victims to pursue even stronger civil penalties that will, hopefully, deter future criminals, and they strengthen the law itself to ensure that child pornographers face prosecution and appropriate punishment for their heinous crimes.

The second purpose achieved today is to send a message. These bills signal to all of America that our society is serious about protecting children and that we are serious about catching child predators.

H.R. 1973 specifically directs coaches and others to report sexual abuse. But these bills send a broader message: everyone in this Nation should join the fight against child exploitation.

We have too many examples of well-meaning adults remaining silent in the face of child abuse. This legislation is meant to push Americans to do what is right, even if it is not easy.

We are all the guardians of our Nation's youth. We all are responsible for their childhood. We are all proponents of their future. These are our children, our pride and joy. We must offer them the same vigilance and protection we offer our own children. The rule before us gives this House a chance to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important rule and the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of Americans want us to work together to improve upon the successes of the Affordable Care Act. We should be expanding access to care and implementing the kind of reforms that will keep American families healthy, not kicking millions of Americans off their insurance to fulfill a deceptive campaign promise, as the Republican healthcare repeal bill will do. Expanding paid sick leave to the 45 percent of American workers who don't have access to it would be a great start.

Each week, up to 3 million employees go to work sick, infecting their coworkers and customers and delaying their own recovery. The benefits of allowing working Americans to earn paid sick leave are undeniable. It slows the spread of disease, lowers healthcare costs, and increases productivity.

If we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule that would allow us to also bring up Representative DELAURO's bill, H.R. 1516, which would allow Americans to have paid sick time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, it is clear after The Indianapolis Star uncovered the widespread abuse scandal that Congress must act to implement consistent, stricter laws governing the reporting of abuses to our Nation's athletes and to all our children. Once again, The Indianapolis Star has shown us the importance of investigative journalism and a free press.

Many of these athletes are too young and are not empowered to speak out against authority figures when they are hurt or abused by them. But each of us as Members of Congress is in a position to do something about it, and we must.

Mr. Speaker, again, I urge my colleagues to listen to the voices of the American people before hurling our Nation further toward disaster with this dangerous healthcare bill.

The majority hasn't held any hearings or gotten input from experts, advocates, or patients. They are ignoring the opposition from groups like AARP, American Medical Association, March of Dimes, and American Hospital Association.

The score later today from the Congressional Budget Office won't change the underlying facts of this bill. It will gut protections for people with preexisting conditions. It will gut essential health benefits, kick millions of people off of health insurance, and place a crushing age tax on those aged 50 to 64 whose premiums will go up. It will also cut billions from Medicaid to pay for a major tax cut for the wealthy. That is $880 billion that they want to take away from Medicaid to give to the rich and corporations. This is so unAmerican, I stumbled over saying it.

Mr. Speaker, a bad process has led to a bad bill. We should be doing what the American people want and improving the Affordable Care Act.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we are here today for the children.

In voting for the bill and the underlying bills, we are sending a message to the abuser of children: If you harm one of these little ones, you will be met with the full fury of the American justice system. You will be discovered and reported by your peers. You will face the threat of appropriately harsh demands. You will face the full force of the law if you visually depict child exploitation.

We are sending a message to the bystanders: You have a solemn duty to protect these children. You have a duty to be their hope and happiness and their future when you step in and stop abuse. You have a duty to report the heinous acts committed by monsters.

Lately, we don't have many moments in Washington where both political parties can come together and reach a consensus, but the legislation we are considering today provides the perfect opportunity.

These bills should not be controversial. They should draw the support of both sides, because protecting our children is a moral necessity for every American. That is, after all, the message these bills send.

I thank Representative BROOKS and Representative JOHNSON for the hard work they have done on these bills, and I thank Chairman GOODLATTE for shepherding these bills through the Judiciary Committee and spending so much time in committee working on legislation to protect our children.

Mr. Speaker, I urge members to vote ''yes'' on the resolution, vote ''yes'' on the underlying bills.

The material previously referred to by Ms. SLAUGHTER is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 352 OFFERED BY MS. SLAUGHTER

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

SEC. 5. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1516) to allow Americans to earn paid sick time so that they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 6. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 1516.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

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

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

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. 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.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House and offer a resolution previously noticed.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President shall immediately release his tax return information to Congress and the American people.

Whereas, in the United States' system of checks and balances, Congress has a responsibility to hold the Executive Branch of government to a fair and equal standard of transparency ensuring the public interest is placed first;

Whereas, according to the Tax History Project, every President since Gerald Ford has disclosed their tax return information to the public;

Whereas, tax returns provide an important baseline of reasonable information including whether the President paid taxes, ownership interests, charitable donations made, and whether tax deductions have been exploited;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation and Russian citizens, including debts owed and whether he shares any partnership interests, equity interests, joint ventures or licensing agreements with Russia or Russians;

Whereas, the President recently fired Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, under whose leadership the FBI was investigating whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election;

Whereas, President Trump reportedly stated to Russian officials during a White House meeting that he fired Director Comey to ease pressure on the ongoing investigation of Russia's influence in the 2016 election;

Whereas, Senate Russia investigators have requested information from the Treasury Department's criminal investigation division, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCEN, which handles cases of money laundering, for information related to President Trump, his top officials and campaign aides. FinCEN has been investigating allegations of foreign money-laundering through purchases of U.S. real estate;

Whereas, the President's tax returns would show us whether he has foreign bank accounts and how much profit he receives from his ownership in myriad partnerships;

Whereas, Donald Trump Jr. said the Trump Organization saw money ''pouring in from Russia'' and that ''Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets.''

Whereas, the White House will not confirm whether the President has filed a 2016 tax return;

Whereas, Congress gave itself the authority to review an individual's tax returns to investigate and reveal possible conflicts of interest of executive branch officials involved dating back to the Teapot Dome scandal.

Whereas, it has been reported that federal prosecutors have issued grand jury subpoenas to associates of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn seeking business records as part of the ongoing probe into Russian involvement in the 2016 election;

Whereas, according to his 2016 candidate filing with the Federal Election Commission, the President has 564 financial positions in companies located in the United States and around the world;

Whereas, against the advice of ethics attorneys and the Office of Government Ethics, the President has refused to divest his ownership stake in his businesses; and can still withdraw funds at any time from the trust of which he is the sole beneficiary;

Whereas, the Emoluments Clause was included in the U.S. Constitution for the express purpose of preventing federal officials from accepting any ''present, Emolument, Office, or Title . . . from any King, Prince, or foreign state'';

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, and Senate Finance Committee have the authority to request the President's tax returns under Section 6103 of the tax code;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Richard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Ways and Means Committee used IRC 6103 authority in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas Director Comey has testified that tax returns are a common tool in investigations because they can show income and motives;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, government contracts, or otherwise: Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, That the House of Representatives shall—

1. Immediately request the tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, and vote to report the information therein to the full House of Representatives.

2. Support transparency in government and the longstanding tradition of Presidents and Presidential candidates disclosing their tax returns.

□ 1300

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentlewoman from California wish to present argument on the parliamentary question of whether the resolution presents a question of the privileges of the House?

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. I do, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California is recognized.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, under clause 1 of rule IX, questions of the privileges of the House are those affecting the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings. I believe that the dignity of this institution is at risk each day that passes without this body exercising its statutory authority and constitutional duty to operate as a coequal branch of government.

The legislative branch of government has the responsibility and authority to keep a proper check on the executive branch under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code. Specifically, three committees have jurisdiction to request tax returns: the Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Finance Committee, and the Joint Committee on Taxation. This provision has been part of our Federal Tax Code since 1924 to facilitate full and complete investigations into scandals that rise to the level of national importance.

Nothing could rise to the level of national importance like the possible financial entanglements our President may have with Russian entities and individuals. This situation is truly unprecedented. It is our sworn duty to uphold the integrity of this institution and examine all the relevant details related to this issue.

Each week we see yet another fact in the growing case of entanglements between our President, his campaign and closest advisers, and Russian officials. The most recent troubling report occurred just last week when we learned that the President himself reportedly made statements directly to Russian officials during an Oval Office meeting regarding the FBI investigation into his campaign ties with Russia. This is the same meeting where the President took it upon himself to reveal highly classified information to Russian officials.

How long can this body allow these types of actions to go unchecked?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is reminded the remarks must be confined to the question of order.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. I understand, Mr. Speaker. I promise that they relate to the question at issue.

Mr. Speaker, further, the American people deserve to know if President Trump has exploited the Federal Tax Code for improper personal gain.

The personal business endeavors of the leader of the free world should be exercised to the highest possible standard. Specifically, the President's business dealings around the world make him more prone to potential conflicts of interest than any President in history. However, the President did not take adequate steps to mitigate any potential issues. He was advised by the Office of Government Ethics to divest himself of his business entanglements. The President chose to ignore this sound advice.

It is now the duty of this body to restore integrity to the oversight process. Our democracy should be an example to the world. Today we have the opportunity to ensure that it is achieved through taking up this overdue investigation. It is only then we can restore the dignity and integrity of the House through exercise of our constitutional duty.

For these reasons, this resolution raises a question of the privileges of the House and should be allowed a vote.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California seeks to offer a resolution as a question of the privileges of the House under rule IX.

As the Chair most recently ruled on May 17, 2017, the resolution directs the Committee on Ways and Means to meet and consider an item of business under the procedures set forth in 26 U.S.C. 6103 and, therefore, does not qualify as a question of the privileges of the House.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Buck moves that the appeal be laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to table will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 352;

Adopting House Resolution 352, if ordered;

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 2052; and

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 467.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 225, nays 187, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 274]

YEAS—225

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
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)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
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
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
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

NAYS—187

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
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
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
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.
Jones
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
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
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
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—17

Bishop (GA)
Black
Brooks (IN)
Burgess
Cummings
Ellison
Graves (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Loudermilk
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Newhouse
Sinema
Swalwell (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Velázquez

□ 1331

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

So the motion to table was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 274.

Stated against:

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 274.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1973, PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1761, PROTECTING AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2017; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MAY 26, 2017, THROUGH JUNE 5, 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 352) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1761) to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from May 26, 2017, through June 5, 2017, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 231, nays 188, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 275]

YEAS—231

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
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
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
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)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
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
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
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

NAYS—188

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
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
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
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.
Jones
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
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
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
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
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
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Bishop (GA)
Black
Cummings
Graves (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Loudermilk
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Newhouse
Swalwell (CA)
Velázquez

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1339

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 239, nays 179, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 276]

YEAS—239

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
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
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lawson (FL)
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nunes
O'Halleran
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
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
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

NAYS—179

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
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
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal

Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Black
Cummings
Garrett
Graves (LA)
Hollingsworth
Johnson, Sam
Loudermilk
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Newhouse
Swalwell (CA)
Velázquez

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1346

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 276.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS AGAINST TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLOITATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2052) to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 0, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 277]

YEAS—418

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

NOT VOTING—12

Black
Cummings
Dunn
Graves (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Loudermilk
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McEachin
McSally
Newhouse
Swalwell (CA)
Velázquez

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1353

Mrs. DEMINGS changed her vote from "nay" to "yea."

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

VA SCHEDULING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 467) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 419, nays 0, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 278]

YEAS—419

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici

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

NOT VOTING—11

Black
Cummings
DesJarlais
Graves (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Loudermilk
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Newhouse
Swalwell (CA)
Velázquez

□ 1400

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes today on account of traveling with the Vice President on official business to Louisiana. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on Roll Call No. 274, "yea" on Roll Call No. 275, "yea" on Roll Call No. 276, "yea" on Roll Call No. 277, and "yea" on Roll Call No. 278.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 375. An act to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the "Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

REQUIRING AN ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS RELATING TO THE USE OF OFFICIAL TIME BY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1293) to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1293

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

SECTION 1. REPORTING REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7131 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(e)(1)(A) Not later than March 31 of each calendar year, the Office of Personnel Management, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, shall submit to each House of Congress a report on the operation of this section during the fiscal year last ending before the start of such calendar year.

"(B) Not later than December 31 of each calendar year, each agency (as defined by section 7103(a)(3)) shall furnish to the Office of Personnel Management the information which such Office requires, with respect to such agency, for purposes of the report which is next due under subparagraph (A).

"(2) Each report by the Office of Personnel Management under this subsection shall include, with respect to the fiscal year described in paragraph (1)(A), at least the following information:

"(A) The total amount of official time granted to employees.

"(B) The average amount of official time expended per bargaining unit employee.

"(C) The specific types of activities or purposes for which official time was granted, and the impact which the granting of such official time for such activities or purposes had on agency operations.

"(D) The total number of employees to whom official time was granted, and, of that total, the number who were not engaged in any activities or purposes except activities or purposes involving the use of official time.

"(E) The total amount of compensation (including fringe benefits) afforded to employees in connection with activities or purposes for which they were granted official time.

"(F) The total amount of official time spent by employees representing Federal employees who are not union members in matters authorized by this chapter.

"(G) A description of any room or space designated at the agency (or its subcomponent) where official time activities will be conducted, including the square footage of any such room or space.

"(3) All information included in a report by the Office of Personnel Management under this subsection with respect to a fiscal year—

"(A) shall be shown both agency-by-agency and for all agencies; and

"(B) shall be accompanied by the corresponding information (submitted by the Office in its report under this subsection) for the fiscal year before the fiscal year to which such report pertains, together with appropriate comparisons and analyses.

"(4) For purposes of this subsection, the term 'official time' means any period of time, regardless of agency nomenclature—

"(A) which may be granted to an employee under this chapter (including a collective bargaining agreement entered into under this chapter) to perform representational or consultative functions; and

''(B) during which the employee would otherwise be in a duty status.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall be effective beginning with the report which, under the provisions of such amendment, is first required to be submitted by the Office of Personnel Management to each House of Congress by a date which occurs at least 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 1293, to amend title 5 of the United States Code to require the Office of Personnel Management to submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today to talk about a bill that would provide taxpayers with greater transparency of official time. ''Official time'' is that term that describes when Federal employees do union work on the taxpayers' dime.

The only standard provided by the statute authorizing official time is that the employees perform union work on official time in a manner that is ''reasonable, necessary, and in the public interest.'' Currently, Federal law does not require agencies to report, annually, on the amount of official time their employees perform.

Until March of this year, the Office of Personnel Management had not reported on official time since fiscal year 2012. When the report was released in March, the data was out of date, containing information from fiscal year 2014.

While the Office of Personnel Management may request that agencies provide data related to official time, OPM does not have any set of standards or procedures prescribing the collection of official time data. Considering the burden that official time puts on the taxpayer, more stringent reporting is necessary.

The latest data provided by OPM shows that taxpayers paid $162 million for salary and benefits related to work done in official time in fiscal year 2014, up from $157 million 2 years earlier in fiscal year 2012.

Agencies reported that bargaining unit employees spent a total of 3.5 million hours performing representational activities on official time.

The current lack of stringent reporting requirements, as well as the broad interpretation of the statute's sole requirement that official time be carried out in a way that is reasonable, necessary, and in the public interest, have clearly opened the door to abuse.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform identified several cases where employees on official time engaged in all sorts of inappropriate activities while on taxpayer-funded time, including everything from leisure to criminal activities. With greater transparency, employees will be less likely to abuse the system, which will result in less waste of taxpayer dollars.

It is by far time we require agencies to provide this information to Congress and to the public. Taxpayers deserve clear, reliable data on how many employees are performing union work on official time in lieu of their regularly assigned government duties.

To accomplish this, H.R. 1293 requires agencies to provide more detailed information to OPM regarding what their employees are doing related to official time. Specifically, the bill requires agencies to report the total amount of official time granted to employees, the average amount of time each employee spends on official time, the specific types of activities for which official time was granted, and the impact official time had on agency operations.

H.R. 1293 requires agencies to report the amount of compensation employees received in connection with the time they spent on activities in connection with official time.

Finally, the bill requires agencies to report a description of rooms and spaces agencies use to conduct official time.

H.R. 1293 will provide taxpayers with the transparency they deserve when it comes to official time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I must say, Mr. Speaker, I originally rose in support of what I thought was a simple reporting bill. In listening to my friend from Florida, this is part and parcel of the negative narrative that is sent in all too frequently on the other side of the aisle about hardworking civil servants and Federal employees. They are not all somehow committing crime on official time. Official time, in fact, has been used to the benefit of the workforce and to the benefit of management.

If this bill, H.R. 1293, is nothing but a precursor to further encroachment on the rights of Federal workers, then I will oppose this bill, and I will urge my Members on this side of the aisle to oppose this bill because, by voting for it, we are enabling something much worse to follow and have this thrown in our faces.

So, Mr. Speaker, I regret that, under the circumstances, and with the message I have just heard, I can no longer support this bill. I can no longer urge my colleagues to support this bill, and we will, in fact, urge a negative vote on this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I might just suggest to my good friend from Virginia that this is a reporting bill, that this is the same bill, as amended by their amendment, that was passed out of committee overwhelmingly, that I believe the gentleman from Virginia voted for. So there has not been any change. It is still a transparency reporting bill to make sure that we account for all the time spent in official time on the taxpayer dime. That is it.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE).

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding this time.

I agree with this great reporting bill. The American people have a right to at least have a reasonable expectation that the Federal Government knows what its employees are doing. Unfortunately, we all know that doesn't always happen, particularly when it comes to the practice of official time. It is amazing to me how little information there is, particularly as it relates to the reporting aspect, as to what is happening under official time.

For those who don't know what it is, Mr. ROSS mentioned it well. Established under the Carter administration, official time allows Federal employee union members to conduct union activities during their work-hours of the agency for which they were hired even if the union activity has nothing to do with their job description. Surprisingly, the Federal agencies are not required to report to Congress the amount of time that employees are spending conducting union business.

Some of my colleagues may disagree about the value of official time. I get that. The gentleman from Virginia and I see differently on this. I certainly oppose the abuse of official time, so we see differently on this.

But I think we can all agree that the American people at least have the right to know the extent to which official time is being used. So, although we may disagree somewhat on policy, I think we can certainly find common ground to promote accountability and transparency within the Federal Government.

As Mr. ROSS mentioned a while ago, the OPM has come out with a study: 3.5 million work-hours spent on official time. That is a lot if it was just dollars, but when you take 3.5 million work-hours multiplied by dollars involved, this is a significant issue that needs to be addressed.

This bill, H.R. 1293, grants the OPM the ability to get necessary information from Federal agencies so that we have a more comprehensive understanding of the official time usage. Currently, there are no standards for OPM to find that kind of information.

So this bill does not eliminate, nor does it restrict, official time usage; it simply shines light on the practice. Again, I believe we can find common ground that the American people deserve to know how their tax dollars are spent.

This is common sense. It is good governance. It is a bill that I believe we should all be able to get behind. I am pleased to support this bill. I am honored and pleased to do so in the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. I urge all our colleagues to support it now.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, my friend from Florida is my friend and he knows I respect him, but when you give an opening statement on a bill that goes far beyond a reporting requirement that we thought we were supporting and you use the occasion to disparage Federal workers and to characterize them in a decidedly negative way as if that somehow really described the average civil servant and what they are up to, then on this side of the aisle, we take exception. Then it is no longer a simple reporting bill; it is a precursor of bad things to come, and we are not going to be party to it. We are not going to enable that. That is why, reluctantly, I must now oppose this bill and urge my Democratic colleagues and those on the other side of the aisle who want to protect Federal employees and honor them and give them the dignity and respect they deserve also to oppose this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I now am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), my dear friend.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Virginia for yielding to me.

You haven't heard any discussion of abuse of official time because there is no record of abuse of official time. My colleagues on the other side simply want to get rid of official time, as they have wanted to do for decades.

A little background: Federal employees have no right to strike, as they do in the private sector. In return, though, the time-honored right to organize and represent employees in their official capacity on matters relating to the workplace has always been in place under Republicans and Democrats alike.

Remember, there is also no requirement to join a union in the first place; yet unions must represent all workers, regardless of their membership or not.

The bill on the House floor, H.R. 1293, is unnecessary. Official time reports are already required. This is a redundant bill.

If my friend is worried that these reports haven't been timely, as he implied then he can do that administratively or do it in this bill. The reason he doesn't do it in this bill is this bill is a cover. It is a cover for two pending bills which are already out of committee. I expect them on the floor any minute now, although, notice the sequence.

□ 1415

Mr. Speaker, this seemingly vanilla bill, is going to be followed by the real bills that my colleagues are after. They are parallel bills. They essentially eliminate official time to represent workers.

Now, why is official time important? They are important for the operation of the Federal Government itself. And why is that? Because there are always going to be disputes and contention between management and labor. Official takes away time that would otherwise be wasted and allows the parties to go to the table and work matters out.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, these two bills are a frontal attack on official time, but they actually stab federal employees in the back. One bill would make it virtually impossible for union members to volunteer their time unless they wanted to give up parts of their retirement benefits.

What kind of quid pro quo is that? What do you want to do next? Reduce pay if a union rep uses official time?

The next bill designates employees who cannot represent other employees. This bill looks like something you would expect from countries where there is no right to organize.

This bill reduces the amount of dues unions can collect, even though they are collecting dues on their own time and not official time. This is a brazen attempt to eliminate the fair-share fee, non-union workers pay for being represented equally with union members, and allow free riders to be served free of charge. This is the beginning of an out-and-out assault on the freedom of workers to organize.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I want to be clear here, because I want to make sure that we are talking about the same bill.

This bill doesn't do anything about union dues. This bill doesn't do anything other than require the transparency of reporting official time. And I would be delighted to engage my good friend from Virginia, whom I have a great deal of respect for, and I have worked very diligently on this committee with for some time, and inquire as to what transpired since this bill left committee until today that would cause him and others who were supportive of it in committee to now say that it is not?

I don't mean to misrepresent anything. While I might have opinions of what I believe, I can tell you factually that this bill is merely, and solely, and exclusively a reporting bill. If I were managing a company and I wanted to know where my resources were, I would want to make sure I managed those resources—including my human resources—so I would like to know where the time of my employees is spent.

There is no prohibition of time being spent. There is no restriction of time being spent. It is merely a reporting bill. It is requiring reporting. It is something the OPM has done before. It was started under President Carter's administration.

Mr. Speaker, I inquire of my good friend if there is anything that has changed to make his opposition now come to the floor?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROSS. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend because I am going to run out of time. I must say to my friend, my prepared remarks were designed to support this bill.

Mr. ROSS. And I appreciate that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I must say, the gentleman from Florida, who is an honorable man and a friend, and we have collaborated, but his own words transformed what this really was. They persuaded us that by voting for this, we are not voting for a reporting bill. That is just the beginning.

My friend from Florida is the one who characterized criminal activity on official time, and unsavory things going on on official time, and allows that to dangle out there as if that characterizes Federal employees generally.

I say to any friend—and I thank him for yielding—that has transformed our perception of this bill. This is no longer a simple reporting bill—although technically that is what it is. It is a precursor, apparently, to an assault of Federal employees—and on official time, specifically—and we cannot be partners to that. We cannot be enablers to that.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, we must oppose this bill, in light of the context my friend from Florida himself said.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, while I understand where my colleague from Virginia is taking my comments from, I must submit that at no time did I allege that the Federal employees, all Federal employees, are committing crimes on official time.

I think just the opposite. A vast majority of our Federal employees are probably some of the best workforce that we have out there. I think that, in any workforce, you are going to have some people that don't live up to the standards of their employment. So what I merely do in my opening statement is to say that there has been a need for transparency that includes the abuse of time by some, not by all.

Again, the vast majority of Federal employees are exceptional employees, hardworking, and absolutely necessary to run this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my good friend from Virginia to please reconsider, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I am certainly gratified for the clarification of my friend.

It now gives me great pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from

Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH), my good friend and a senior member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding, and I join him in opposition to this bill.

While originally my remarks would have been much kinder to the bill, and I may have considered supporting it, I did not consider it favorably in committee. I know we had a voice vote on that. But in light of the unfortunate remarks that imply that there was illegal activity going on by Federal employees, and that is why we need this bill that is before us right now, I do have to agree with the ranking member, the gentleman from Virginia, that this bill is, indeed, a part of the vanguard of legislation to severely restrict and eliminate the use of official time.

Under the bipartisan Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, a Federal employees who serves as a union steward or union representative may be granted official time to perform activities that—and this is the important standard that is in the bill—the gentleman from Georgia indicated that we need this bill because there is no standard.

The standard in the Civil Service Reform Act requires a number of things: It requires both labor and management to agree on the use of official time, and that official time be ''reasonable, necessary, and in the public interest.''

That is the standard today, and every single Federal workplace—management and labor—have to agree that the use of official time is reasonable, that it is necessary, and that it is in the public interest. That is a great standard, and that is what has been going on so far.

While there are those who seek to curb or repeal the statutory right and may claim that it amounts to misuse of government resources, let me offer you another concrete example of why official time is critical to the Federal workplace and serves the interests of the American people and taxpayer.

In the wake of the devastating terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Nation also endured a series of anthrax attacks perpetuated through the United States mail system against media offices in Florida, New York, and also Federal offices here in the Nation's Capital. The affected facilities included the Brentwood Mail Processing and Distribution Center here in D.C., that is now named after two dedicated postal employees, Thomas Morris and Joseph Curseen, who lost their lives to anthrax exposure at that facility.

This is immediately after September 11. They were postal workers. They died of inhalation of anthrax poisoning because of the jobs they were doing on behalf of this country. The risk of further anthrax attacks threatened the safety of our postal workforce. I had two sisters with young children at the time working at the post office, and I knew of this well.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to my friend from Massachusetts.

Mr. LYNCH. It jeopardized the safety of our postal workforce and customers, as well as the free flow of information and commerce that the constitutional responsibility of the United States Postal Service requires.

But rather than refusing to go to work in a dangerous workplace, by the use of official time, the management of the United States Postal Service, and the union representatives of the United States Postal Service sat down and worked out a measure where the union agreed to send their workers in, the mail kept running to every home and business in America, but the postal workers absorbed that danger on their own because they knew that steps were being taken to keep them and their families—because the threat was that anthrax would get on their clothes and they would bring that back to their own homes. We worked that out.

That agreement would not have been worked out but for the use of official time—and a lot of official time that was used in that crisis. That is the responsibility that those union representatives had to the workers. They have to guarantee a safe workplace for those workers, and that is why we should vote against this bill. This is a wolf in sheep's clothing, and we ought to vote this down.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. If I might just, again, clarify for the record, this is a reporting bill. It is a transparency bill. The standard that my good friend from Massachusetts discusses, and that I agreed with, is not affected at all by this bill.

I would have no doubt whatsoever that in similar circumstances that happened after 9/11 in those post offices, that those same employees, regardless of the risk, would do exactly what they did, because that is how valuable they are to the system. That is how valuable they are to this country.

What I can't understand is what has transpired between voting this out of committee to today that has changed the opinion.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE), my dear friend.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman CONNOLLY.

I rise today coming in saying I would support this bill. Many people know I served 30 years as a Federal employee working in HR, understanding labor relations, safety issues, environmental issues, diversity issues, and knowing clear well that the official time that is allotted to employees to sit down with their representative of the union to talk about if they feel like they are being sexually harassed, if they feel like they are in an environment that is not safe for them, official time is extremely necessary.

What happens in official time? It allows a lot of grievances to be processed and resolved through communication between union and management.

There have been several legislative reform proposals introduced to address the way union representatives are allowed to utilize official time.

Now, I was taken back when my colleague said ''criminal activities.'' Mr. Speaker, criminal activity is something that is in a whole different venue. If you are a Federal employee and you create an illegal activity, you do not need official time to do that. I have never known, in the time that I served in HR, in labor relations, and served in all of the different capacities, have I seen someone doing criminal activity on official time.

It would be a different thing if we were clear that this bill was about reporting the time, which I would not oppose. But when you present this scenario about official time, as it being something that is negative, something that is being used in a criminal capacity, that is totally something I would be opposed to.

Let me tell you some examples of what representatives can use it for: If there is a whistleblower accusation, an employee would go to their union steward and ask for official time.

If it was a grievance on behalf of the employee, they can use it.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Michigan.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, union representatives can also assist if it is an OSHA issue, if it is racial discrimination, or sexual harassment.

Instead of allowing employees to complete nonpolitical activities, some of my colleagues seem more interested in preventing employees from doing their jobs by using official time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleague to defeat senseless attacks against Federal employees' official time.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has 9½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Virginia has 8½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN), my friend.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to discuss this bill, and I want to thank the colleague from across the aisle here who has illuminated the future as it relates to undertaking this whole issue.

It is with that in mind that I want to speak to the value of the use of official time.

□ 1430

While I am not concerned so much about the collection of the information as to what is happening, I am concerned with how it is being translated and will be used in the future.

For decades, both Republicans and Democrats alike have strongly supported the use of official time because it streamlines the efficiency and quality of government. We should be thanking our union representatives who use official time to address workplace problems and operational issues within our government.

Within our Federal Government, official time leads to swift conflict resolutions that would otherwise require costly litigation, improves the relationship between labor and management, and protects whistleblowers who have exposed government waste and abuse. In some cases, it has even saved lives, as in the issue of AFGE local president Kathleen Dahl, when there was a breakout of Legionnaires' disease.

Furthermore, official time costs one-tenth of 1 percent of the cost of salaries and benefits for all Federal employees. That is a fraction of employee compensation. Ultimately, it saves taxpayers dollars and ensures transparency.

So while we may be discussing today simply a bill that will record the time that is spent in such a noble and important function, it is simply a precursor to the disparaging of union workers and Federal workers as we move forward. Mr. Speaker, I oppose any movement in that direction.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES).

Mr. SARBANES. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor today expecting to support H.R. 1293, which has to do with the reporting of official time, but based on the negative commentary we are getting generally about official time and the knock against Federal employees we have heard here today, I am anxious now about supporting this bill because it appears that what is happening is our colleagues on the other side are setting the table for bringing other legislation eventually to the floor that is actually going to attack and undermine official time.

My colleague earlier referred to a wolf in sheep's clothing represented by this bill. You can look at it as the camel's nose under the tent. Whatever it is, I am worried now that the agenda here is to undermine official time.

Let's remind ourselves of the various benefits of official time. It helps to resolve workplace disputes, which is really important. It helps to improve efficiency within the workplace. It is what leads to negotiating positive agreements between labor and management. It is how official time, when it is used wisely—and there is no evidence that it is not used wisely; there is no evidence of abuse or misuse of official time—and when it is used the way it has been used, it helps our Federal agencies help the American people. It helps these agencies function well.

I hope that we can reject whatever is coming down the pipeline. I was cautiously optimistic when I came to support this bill that these other efforts that seem to be underway were maybe being put to bed, but now I am concerned that there is an agenda coming. So we will just have to see how it goes.

I want to reiterate my strong support for the use of official time the way it is used by our Federal employees, which is in a very positive fashion, and I urge my colleagues on the other side to protect official time and all of its benefits.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I agree with my friend from Maryland. Official time is a very useful tool in the Federal workplace, both for management and for labor, and has proved its worth over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I had intended to support H.R. 1293, but after hearing the remarks from the chairman on the floor this morning, I am afraid that this bill is just a precursor for what the majority will try to do to our dedicated Federal employees.

The sentiments expressed by the chairman are in line with the legislation that appeared before the Veterans' Affairs Committee just this past week, legislation that would have undermined the use of official time for employees at the VA. So there are attacks happening in other parts of the House.

The committee marked up H.R. 1461, the misnamed VET Protection Act. This bill would limit the amount of time VA employees can use for official time to improve working conditions for themselves and for their colleagues and, in turn, improve services for veterans.

We considered this bill, despite the fact we didn't have clear data on the impact of the bill on the VA's HR capability. I realize this bill we are considering on the floor today is about that data, but the spirit in which it is being moved forward is not about trying to illuminate how official time has helped our veterans.

There are 49,386 vacant positions at the VA. Rolling back the use of official time will only increase the demands on the VA's human resources staff, making it harder to fill positions and recruit and retain quality providers.

Official time benefits our veterans. In Pittsburgh, as was mentioned before by my colleague from New Jersey, an AFGE president used official time to press the VA to address a Legionnaires' disease outbreak that killed 6 veterans and made 16 others sick. Her actions helped save veterans' lives, and she used official time to do it.

At the Phoenix VA there was a 29 percent turnover rate for licensed practical nurses. Union representatives used official time to improve working conditions and cut the turnover rate in half. Less turnover means better care for veterans.

I warn my colleagues against this bill and future misguided legislation to undermine official time and the function of our Federal agencies.

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

In attempting to summarize, Mr. Speaker, I do want to reiterate that my friend from Florida is an honorable man. When he says this is about one thing, I believe him. Perhaps in the introduction to this bill there was a characterization that was not intended, and I accept that explanation.

Federal workers are hardworking civil servants. They serve the American people. I know my friend from Florida agrees. The overwhelming majority of them are dedicated. They seize a mission every day, whether it be at the VA, the Social Security Administration, or our Nation's parks. They are dedicated to the proposition that they are there to serve the American people. It is important to honor their service, to respect their service, to not allow even the inference to be drawn that a negative example somehow could be construed as characteristic of the whole, for that is false.

That is the narrative we Democrats and, hopefully, a number of Republicans want to change, because it is not true. We want to honor those civil servants.

All too often, our civil servants have become pin cushions. Again, I know my friend from Florida does not intend that, but there are others who have intended that. That sparks something, certainly, on this side of the aisle and with this Member, who represents a lot of Federal employees and cherishes their service. For us, it is a very personal matter.

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

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

I appreciate the comments from my friend from Virginia, and I will reiterate my comments made earlier here on this floor that we are very grateful for the Federal workforce that we do have and that they are, by far, one of the best human resources in employment in the world. We are grateful for their service.

As in any case, there might be some bad ones, but, more importantly, all this bill requests is that we just report the transparency of their services and official time. It is neither an indictment nor restriction on Federal time whatsoever, and, in fact, can be used as a tool for Federal employees to justify some of the official time they are doing for the benefit of not only their colleagues, but also this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I would again request that Members of this House support my bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1293, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER FRAUD PREVENTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 624) to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on documents sent by mail by the Federal Government, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 624

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 ''Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. RESTRICTION OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS ON DOCUMENTS SENT BY MAIL.

(a) RESTRICTION.—An agency may not include the social security account number of an individual on any document sent by mail unless the head of the agency determines that the inclusion of the social security account number on the document is necessary.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each CFO Act agency shall issue regulations specifying the circumstances under which inclusion of a social security account number on a document sent by mail is necessary. Such regulations shall include—

(1) instructions for the partial redaction of social security account numbers where feasible; and

(2) a requirement that social security account numbers not be visible on the outside of any package sent by mail.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth-year anniversary of such date of enactment, the head of each CFO Act agency shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and any other appropriate authorizing committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, a report on the implementation of subsection (a) that includes the following:

(1) The title and identification number of any document used by the CFO Act agency during the previous year that includes the complete social security account number of an individual.

(2) For the first report submitted, a plan that describes how the CFO Act agency will comply with the requirements of subsection (a).

(3) For the final report submitted, the title and identification number of each document used by the CFO Act agency for which the head of the agency has determined, in accordance with regulations issued pursuant to subsection (b), that the inclusion of a social security account number on such document is necessary, and the rationale for such determination.

(4) For any other report that is not the first or final report submitted, an update on the implementation of the plan described under paragraph (2).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY.—The term ''agency'' has the meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code, but includes an establishment in the legislative or judicial branch of the Government (except the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Architect of the Capitol, and any activities under the direction of the Architect of the Capitol).

(2) CFO ACT AGENCY.—The term ''CFO Act agency'' means the agencies listed in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 901(b) of title 31, United States Code.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any document sent by mail on or after the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 624, the Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017, introduced by my good friend from California, Representative DAVID VALADAO.

I want to start by thanking Chairman BRADY and Subcommittee Chairman JOHNSON from the Ways and Means Committee for their assistance in getting this bill to the floor. Their work on addressing the unnecessary use of Social Security numbers is well appreciated by all Americans across the country and especially Members in this body.

Mr. Speaker, we live in an interconnected world. Personal identifiers, such as Social Security numbers, are used for much more than just Social Security benefits. Social Security numbers are widely used to receive government services and to apply for services in the private sector, like opening bank accounts, credit cards, and even applying for college.

The extent to which Social Security numbers are a de facto national identifier has heightened concerns about identity theft. In the wrong hands, a stolen Social Security number can be used for devastating effects.

This bill helps move the government closer to the goal of minimizing unnecessary use of Social Security numbers. All entities in the Federal Government will be prohibited from sending a Social Security account number by mail, unless the head of the entity deems it necessary.

The 24 major CFO Act agencies will also have to issue regulations specifying the circumstances under which inclusion of a Social Security number is deemed necessary. They will have to ensure numbers are redacted partially, where feasible, and to ensure no numbers are visible from the outside of a mail piece.

Finally, agencies will be required to report to Congress on their progress in implementing the requirements of the law.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is very important. The Social Security Administration alone sends 223 million notices containing a full Social Security number every year. We must take care to properly safeguard the personally identifiable information of American citizens. The consequences of failure can be dire.

In 2015, the Office of Personnel Management experienced a major data breach where the personally identifiable information for 22 million Americans was compromised.

The Oversight Committee majority staff report recommended Federal agencies reduce the collection of Social Security numbers and other personally identifiable information.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a step in the right direction. I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 624, the Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017, as amended.

Introduced by our colleague, Mr. VALADAO from California, this bill is a commonsense step to addressing an enormously growing problem of identity theft and protecting the personal information of every American.

Each year, 18 million Americans become victims of identity theft. That is 18 million. A leading cause of this problem is the unauthorized acquisition of Social Security numbers by criminals.

H.R. 624 would address this issue by restricting the instances in which agencies may include the full Social Security numbers on documents sent through the mail. The bill would prohibit agencies from including those numbers on mailed correspondence unless the head of an agency himself or herself determines that inclusion is absolutely essential.

Agencies would be required to issue regulations delineating the situations in which Social Security numbers are necessary, and would be instructed to partially redact numbers wherever feasible.

□ 1445

Agencies would also be expressly prohibited from making Social Security numbers visible on the outside of any mailed packages.

In recent years, many agencies have taken steps to reduce their use of Social Security numbers, and this bill would simply codify some of those practices agencies have already adopted. For instance, the Social Security Administration itself no longer prints Social Security numbers on its annual cost-of-living adjustment notices or benefit checks, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is in the process of removing Social Security numbers from the Medicare cards issued to beneficiaries.

These steps are critical to ensuring that the Federal Government adequately safeguards the personally identifiable information of individuals and does everything it can to protect Americans from identity theft.

Although this bill helps provide a lot of protection, reducing the threat of identity theft by removing Social Security numbers from mailed items is not always as easy as it seems. Many agencies confront high costs when reprogramming outdated legacy information technology systems to allow mailings to be printed differently.

Agencies across the Federal Government have been reluctant to retire those legacy IT systems because of funding constraints that limit IT investments, slow modernization, and force agencies to defer needed IT upgrades in favor of some more pressing, urgent problems.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the important responsibility Congress has to fund these IT modernization efforts as it considers this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act is a good, bipartisan bill that is necessary to protect the American public. I urge my colleagues to support its passage, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), who is the author of this bill.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 624, the Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act, legislation to protect Americans—especially children, veterans, and the elderly—from identity theft.

Not long ago, I was approached by a constituent in my district who showed me a letter she had received from the Social Security Administration. The document she showed me contained the full Social Security number, name, and address clearly printed.

Upon further investigation, we found that the Social Security Administration had also printed postcards which contained the full Social Security number of the intended recipient clearly visible on the exterior of the mailing. Even more concerning, the practice of printing Social Security numbers on government documents is not exclusive to the Social Security Administration, but occurs throughout every department of the Federal Government.

In today's digital age, we hear more and more about the importance of protecting our identity. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States. It threatens the financial security of millions of Americans as well as the economic stability of the United States as a whole. In fact, every 2 seconds, another American becomes the victim of identity fraud. Even worse, these crimes tend to impact vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and veterans, the most.

Despite these alarming statistics, there is a high prevalence of needlessly printed Social Security numbers on documents issued by the Federal Government. My legislation puts an end to this unacceptable practice and limits when the Federal Government can mail documents that contain an individual's full Social Security number.

Social Security was established to provide older Americans financial security during their retirement years, not to jeopardize that security by negligently handling someone's personal information.

My bill, the Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act, would prevent the Federal Government from mailing documents that contain full Social Security numbers unless absolutely necessary. This requires Federal agencies to partially redact Social Security numbers on the documents whenever possible.

Please join me in supporting this commonsense legislation that will help all Americans avoid falling victim to one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding, and I also want to take this time to thank the gentleman from Florida and my colleague and good friend, Congressman VALADAO, for the introduction of this legislation, H.R. 624, which I support.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, identity theft throughout the country is a very significant problem. It becomes even more compounded in this day of the internet when we have to deal with a whole host of issues that make the ability to steal one's identity even more easily done. This measure attempts to try to address a part of that challenge by dealing with the issue of Social Security numbers.

We all know Social Security numbers are key information used to identify ourselves, and we know that if they fall into the wrong hands, they can be used to commit identity theft.

I think all of us remember when, at some point in our age, we got our Social Security number and we memorized it, and it is something that is very important in our society today. But many thieves find these numbers are incredibly valuable because they are a link that can connect a person's information across a whole host of agencies, systems, and databases in this age of the internet.

Criminals can use stolen Social Security numbers to file fraudulent tax returns, obtain loans, and commit other kinds of crimes. An estimated 13 million Americans experienced financial identity theft in 2014 alone, resulting in over $16 billion—with a B—$16 billion lost to fraud.

In 2007, to combat these issues, there was an Identity Theft Task Force that made recommendations to the administration on ways to eliminate the unnecessary collection, use, and display—the display, which this legislation attempts to address—of Social Security numbers.

Yesterday, the Government Accountability Office released testimony on these efforts by the Federal Government to reduce the collection, use, and display of Social Security numbers. In conclusion, the GAO testified that, until the Office of Management and Budget adopts more effective practices for guiding agency Social Security number reduction efforts, overall governmentwide reduction will likely remain limited and difficult to measure, and the risk of Social Security numbers being exposed and used to commit identity theft will remain greater than it need be. Again, this legislation attempts to help address that.

The Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act would enact measures to help protect American citizens, especially children, veterans, and senior citizens, from identity theft and fraud. It does so by reducing the number of mailed documents the Federal Government sends to individuals that include full Social Security numbers.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from California an additional 1 minute.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia.

In addition, it also takes steps to ensure that, if inclusion is necessary, the number is not visible from the outside of a mailing. I think, probably, many of us have received mail that, in fact, had our Social Security number there and identified.

As I said at the outset, this is no silver bullet to stopping identity theft; it is a commonsense measure to reducing it.

Social Security, as we all know, is a promise made to those who have worked hard throughout their lives to contribute to the system, to contribute to the American way of life. It also provides those seniors who are living on their Social Security the ability to have dignity and additional security during their golden years. As a result, Congress must do what it can to reduce the strains on the program, particularly from fraud and theft.

For all of those reasons, I support this legislation, and I support Congressman VALADAO's efforts and my

good friends from Florida and Virginia for bringing this commonsense measure to the floor.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida, and I thank my colleague from Virginia for supporting this piece of legislation put forth by our friend and colleague from California, Congressman DAVID VALADAO.

The Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act is a bill that should gain unanimous support in this institution. According to the Justice Department, identity theft affects nearly 18 million people, costing more than $15 billion in 2014 alone. This represents roughly 7 percent of all Americans age 16 or older. In my home State of Illinois alone, in 2014, it was recognized that the FTC saw a 65 percent increase in identity theft. More than 14 percent of the victims are elderly.

We all know that Social Security numbers are the link to a key piece of information criminals use to steal people's identities. This commonsense piece of legislation takes a very important step to ensure that our Federal agencies, our government, funded by the hardworking taxpayers of this country, are not making this problem even worse.

This bill, as you have heard today, would restrict the use of Social Security numbers on documents sent via mail by the Federal Government unless the head of a department or agency determines the inclusion of such number is necessary—which I can't think of a single instance where that would be necessary, but I guess we have to put that in there anyway. This seems like a no-brainer, but we in this institution have to pass a bill to make sure that it happens, which is why I am a proud cosponsor of this bill.

I want to thank Congressman VALADAO again. I also want to thank Congress' newest father, our colleague from California, ERIC SWALWELL, for being a cosponsor of this legislation, too. This bill will have a real impact on reducing identity theft in this country, and I want to commend, once again, everybody on the floor today for their support.

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

Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important piece of legislation. This is one of the fastest growing crimes in our country: the diversion of Social Security checks and rebates. It is almost without any kind of corrective action. There are few prosecutions and even fewer convictions. So, if you are a criminal and you are looking for something that is relatively cost-free for you, this is the way to do it.

This bill would provide some important protections to the American public. I would hope that we build on this.

My friend from Florida and I serve on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and we have heard testimony about this crime as it has grown exponentially over the last 5 or 6 years. It is my hope that U.S. attorneys all across America will put more emphasis on this crime and use their resources to go after people who are predators of American taxpayers, especially many of our seniors who rely on these checks or these rebates to augment and supplement their income. So there are victims of this crime, and they are the American taxpayer.

I think it is an important first step. I support the legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it as well.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we here have an obligation to provide for the common defense, and I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that includes that we provide to defend our citizenry from such crimes as identity theft. This bill is a step in the right direction.

I want to thank my good friend from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for his efforts. I want to thank Mr. VALADAO from California for sponsoring this bill.

This is a bipartisan measure that will allow us to address the concerns of modern-day crimes of identity and of modern-day crimes of privacy. It is a bill that moves in the right direction. While it is not the panacea, it is a good first step to protecting our citizenry.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption by my colleagues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 624, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on Federal documents sent by mail, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REDUCING REGULATORY BURDENS ACT OF 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YOHO). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 348 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 953.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1500

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 953) to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes, with Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Today we are considering H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017, introduced to clarify congressional intent regarding pesticide use in or near navigable waters.

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, otherwise known as FIFRA, is the appropriate Federal statute to govern safety and the use of pesticides.

FIFRA first passed in 1910, 62 years before the Clean Water Act was passed. In 2009, the Sixth Circuit Court decision, the National Cotton Council v. EPA, changed how this all works. For years before the Clean Water Act, pesticide use was regulated by the EPA under FIFRA. Under FIFRA, the EPA regulates and approves pesticides for safe use under the label, and they have full jurisdiction under FIFRA.

The EPA previously ruled that using pesticides under FIFRA-approved use does not require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, otherwise known as NPDES, permit under the Clean Water Act.

Because of this court decision in 2009, those who have been safely applying products to control pest populations now must comply with additional NPDES permitting.

Some of my colleagues across the aisle have called this Groundhog Day in the past. I agree. Time after time, they have supported increasing the regulations just for regulation's sake. They are even willing to risk public health and outbreaks of Zika and West Nile virus.

The Sixth Circuit Court decision ignored the congressional intent when the FIFRA and the Clean Water Act were passed. The court ignored sensible agency interpretation, it ignored years of regulatory precedent, it expanded the clean water jurisdiction beyond the scope set by Congress and over areas already appropriately regulated. The court decision placed burden on the

EPA, requiring a new and expanded NPDES permitting process for products already regulated.

The EPA says there are about 365,000 pesticide applicators affected by this ruling. They would include State agencies, cities and counties, mosquito control districts, water districts, pesticide applicators, farmers and ranchers, forest managers, scientists, and even everyday citizens or homeowners.

The EPA estimates $50 million in paperwork to comply alone every year with this new regulation. Federal, State, and local agencies are forced to spend taxpayer dollars in permitting, paperwork, and compliance. Private applicators, like farmers and ranchers, also face increased costs. This adds compliance costs, adds permitting costs, and it adds time and hurts productivity and efficiency. It does not add any new environmental protections.

This bad court decision affecting the budgetary decisions from local agencies, I will give you some examples here: the Benton County, Washington, Mosquito Control District preserves 20 percent of its annual budget in case it is sued under the Clean Water Act. I think it is important to mention when the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972, it was set up with severe penalties to go after the polluters we had—I like to say the polluters of the 1960s—to clean up our waters, that we had severe problems. And when it did that, it also opened it up for citizens' lawsuits and opens up the door for more litigation.

The Benton County, Washington, Mosquito Control District, $37,000 in permit costs and paperwork they have spent. Benton County could have treated almost 2,600 acres for mosquito abatement or 400 lab tests for West Nile virus, or paid for three seasonal workers.

In Gem County, Idaho, the Mosquito Abatement District's staff spends 3 weeks a year tabulating and documenting seasonal pesticide applications related to permit oversight.

California vector control districts have estimated that it costs them $3 million to conduct administration of the NPDES permits. They also have to spend 20 percent of their annual operating budget just to maintain the computer software related to the unnecessary NPDES permit.

As a result of this court ruling, mosquito districts, State and local agencies, are now vulnerable to frivolous lawsuits for things like simple paperwork violations under the Clean Water Act. Fines for these paperwork violations, which obviously don't have any affect on the environment, can be as much as $50,000 a day.

For example, the Gem County, Idaho, Mosquito Abatement District was forced to spend $450,000 to resolve a lawsuit.

In my home State of Ohio, the Mosquito Control District for Toledo is currently embroiled in a citizen's lawsuit from a simple paperwork violation.

The 2012 West Nile outbreak is proof NPDES permits and association costs are hindering the ability to protect the public.

In 2012, the first year of the permitting requirement from the court case, West Nile cases jumped from 712 cases to almost to over 5,600 cases. That is nearly an 800 percent increase because of the unnecessary permit requirements.

The States and communities affected by West Nile had to wait until after a public health emergency was declared. Only then could relief from the NPDES permit be approved. Only after the West Nile had spread could local agencies use lifesaving pesticides to kill mosquitoes carrying the virus. Keep in mind, when the local entity, municipality, declares an emergency, they don't need to get a permit. They can spray. I like to say it is after the fact when the mosquitoes are out of control, then we do aerial spraying. Maybe we could have prevented it with surface spraying and be less harm to the environment. We shouldn't have to wait until it becomes an emergency.

H.R. 953 gets rid of the unnecessary red tape so communities can prevent outbreaks of diseases like Zika and West Nile.

Cities that need to conduct the routine preventative mosquito abatement should not have to do it with one hand tied behind their back. H.R. 953 provides a narrow, limited exception from NPDES permit requirements for those pesticides already approved under FIFRA law and used in compliance under the label which is approved by the EPA.

I think this is an important point to keep in mind: EPA already regulates these pesticides and approves them under FIFRA. It goes through rigorous testing and reporting requirements, and they set the label and make the determination. They approve how it is going to be used. If it is a restricted pesticide, they can also put more restrictions on the applicators and who the applicators are.

Therefore, removing this redundant NPDES permit is appropriate because the EPA already has full control and can handle the situation like they did for over 60 years before this court case.

The EPA has assisted in drafting H.R. 953, which does not roll back any environmental protections. It fixes the regulatory problem caused by the Sixth Circuit Court's decision and maintains the EPA's jurisdiction through FIFRA.

Similar legislation has passed the House every Congress since the court's decision, and I look forward to passing it again today, and then passing it in the Senate and have the President sign it into law.

A list of organizations—this is a snapshot of the many organizations because I don't have enough time to list all the organizations, but the American Mosquito Control Association supports it; the American Farm Bureau Federation; the National Farmers Union; the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture; the National Association of Wheat Growers; National Corn Growers Association; and United Fresh Produce Association. Those are just a few groups representing thousands of Americans who depend on commonsense EPA regulations for their livelihood.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD—and I want to talk about it here for a minute—I have a letter from former Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack. In 2009, he was Secretary of Agriculture in the Obama administration. When this court case happened, he sent out a letter to Lisa Jackson, the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. In his letter, he urges the EPA to consider the significant adverse effect of the Sixth Circuit Court's 2009 decision, the National Cotton Council and EPA will have on American farmers and USDA agencies. He said in the letter:

''By broadening the Act's reach, the court burdens American agriculture with a newly minted NPDES permit requirement. . . .''

''The Sixth Circuit's decision encumbers the American farmers' and the agencies' ability to do business, while reaping little or no environmental benefit in exchange.''

I want to repeat that. The Secretary of Agriculture in the Obama administration said that this court case has little environmental benefit, and it hampers American farmers to do their job to produce the most wholesome, safe, affordable food in the world.

''Subjecting FIFRA-compliant pesticides to the additional regulatory regime''—he goes on to say—''of the CWA is duplicative and will not help protect the environment.''

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD this letter, dated March 6, 2009, from Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack and his opposition to the court case and, in his opinion, what this bill does.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, DC, March 6, 2009.

Hon. LISA P. JACKSON,
Administrator, U.S. Environment Protection Agency,
Washington, DC.

Subject: The National Cotton Council of America, et al., v. United States Environmental Protection Agency, Nos. 06–4630; 07–3180/3181/3182/3183/3184/3185/3186/3187/3191/3236 (6th Cir. Jan. 7, 2009).

DEAR MS. JACKSON: The United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit recently invalidated the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Final Rule entitled, ''Application of Pesticides to Waters of the United States in Compliance With FIFRA.'' 71 Fed. Reg. 68,483 (Nov. 27, 2006) (Final Rule). A petition for rehearing or for rehearing en bane before the Sixth Circuit is due on April 9, 2009. I would very much appreciate your taking into consideration the significant adverse effect that the court's decision will have on American farmers, as well as on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, and therefore request that you seek further review of this decision by the Sixth Circuit.

In its Final Rule, the EPA reasonably interpreted the term ''pollutant'' in the Clean Water Act (CWA) as generally excluding pesticides that are applied in compliance with the relevant requirements of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The Final Rule established that the application of pesticides in compliance with FIFRA would not require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit when they are applied directly into waters of the United States in order to control pests, or when they are applied to control pests that are present over waters of the United States, including near those waters, when a portion of the pesticides unavoidably will be deposited into the water in order to target the pests effectively. The EPA specifically concluded that the terms ''chemical wastes'' and ''biological materials'' in the CWA's definition of pollutants do not encompass the types of pesticide applications addressed in the Final Rule. 71 Fed. Reg. 68,486.

The Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit concluded that the Final Rule was contrary to the plain language of the CWA. Although the court agreed with the EPA that chemical pesticides applied directly to water to perform a useful purpose are not chemical wastes, it held that excess pesticides and pesticide residue meet the common definition of waste, and therefore are pollutants under the CWA. The court held that the EPA is required to regulate the residue of chemical pesticides when the pesticide is applied to land or air, and the residue finds its way into the navigable waters of the. United States, and when the pesticide is applied directly to the water and the residue has a lasting effect beyond its intended purpose. The court also found that Congress intended for ''biological materials'' to encompass more than ''biological wastes.'' The court held that all biological pesticides are biological materials, and therefore pollutants under the CWA.

The court's adverse decision will have profound implications for American farmers. The panel's ruling effectively broadens the potential application of the CWA to reach agricultural activities that the EPA has never regulated under the provisions of the CWA. By broadening the Act's reach, the court burdens American agriculture with a newly minted NPDES permit requirement for the application of all FIFRA-compliant biological pesticides whenever those pesticides might find their way into waters of the United States, and for all FIFRA-compliant chemical pesticides whenever the residues of those pesticides find their way into waters of the United States. The permit requirement could reach almost any pesticide application, requiring farmers to navigate a permitting system that is ill-suited to the demands of agricultural production. Failure to obtain a timely permit for pesticide application could cripple American farmers' emergency pest management efforts and hamper their ability to respond quickly to new pest infestations or threats of infestations, thus increasing the risk of crop losses.

Additionally, several USDA agencies engage in the ground and aerial application of pesticides, and would be adversely affected by the panel's decision. The Forest Service (FS) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) now will be required to obtain NPDES permits, which could compromise the agencies' ability to respond with efficiency and flexibility to emerging threats and emergency situations. The delay and expense associated with complying with the NPDES permitting requirement could substantially curtail the agencies' use of pesticides. For the FS, this could result in diminished efforts to protect the National Forests from pest infestation and could potentially increase the risk and severity of wildfires. It could also significantly hamper aerial spraying programs such as APHIS's Mormon Cricket and Grasshopper Program, undertaken in cooperation with western states. Additionally, research programs involving both the conventional and the experimental applications of pesticides undertaken by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) also will be detrimentally affected by the panel's decision. The time-consuming and costly process of negotiating the NPDES permit application process will diminish the efficiency with which the ARS will be able to undertake its initiatives, and may, in some instances, curtail the agency's projects entirely.

The Sixth Circuit's decision encumbers the American farmers' and the agencies' ability to do business, while reaping little or no environmental benefit in exchange. Subjecting FIFRA-compliant pesticides to the additional regulatory regime of the CWA is duplicative and will not help protect the environment. FIFRA mandates that the EPA approve and issue a registration for a pesticide product only after the EPA has determined that the product will not cause ''unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.'' The pesticide registration and re-registration process under FIFRA considers the effects of pesticides on both human health and aquatic resources. If the EPA has concluded that a pesticide satisfies FIFRA and will not have an ''unreasonable adverse effect on the environment,'' then it is reasonable to exclude the application of that pesticide from the permitting requirements of the CWA.

In short, I am concerned that the court's decision will compromise American farmers' and USDA agencies' ability to respond efficiently and effectively to emergency threats, while providing little or no additional environmental protection in return. Thank you for taking these issues into account as you consider seeking further review of this case.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK,
Secretary.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I have nearly 120 organizations that support H.R. 953, representing a wide variety of public and private entities and thousands of stakeholders. I have a letter from the nearly 120. I listed some of those. Some of the additional names are Agricultural Retailers Association; American Farm Bureau Federation; American Mosquito Control Association; the Association of Equipment Manufacturers; CropLife America; Family Farm Alliance; National Agricultural Aviation Association; the National Alliance of Forest Owners; National Association of State Departments of Agriculture; National Farmers Union; National Pest Management Association; and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. I include that letter in the RECORD.

MAY 3, 2017.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the over one hundred undersigned organizations, we urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017.

For almost forty years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pesticide applicators including public health agencies charged with mosquito control operated exclusively under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). In fact, EPA has testified to the adequacy of FIFRA's comprehensive regulatory requirements including substantial enforcement mechanisms in pursuit of that goal.

However, a 2009 activist-inspired lawsuit resulted in a federal court decision identifying a technicality in the law that Congress had not properly clarified its intent that FIFRA should have preeminence over the Clean Water Act (CWA). This decision resulted in pesticide users being required to obtain a CWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. These permits were originally created to address the discharge of waste by major industrial polluters, but now are mandated for mosquito control districts and others who are applying pesticides approved by EPA for use in the environment for their beneficial purposes of trying to prevent or control the spread of public health disease in the U.S.

Though the NPDES permit burden lacks any additional environmental benefit under these circumstances, it does force substantial costs on thousands of small application businesses and farms, as well as the municipal, county, state and federal agencies responsible for protecting natural resources and public health. Further, and most menacing, the permit exposes all pesticide users—regardless of permit eligibility—to the liability of CWA-based citizen law suits. In a number of instances, applicators—that once conducted mosquito abatement applications for local governments and homeowner associations—can't afford the costs or risk of frivolous litigation that accompanies NPDES PGPs and have refrained from conducting public health applications.

H.R. 953 would clarify Congressional intent that federal law does not require this redundant permit for already regulated pesticide applications.

In the 112th Congress, similar legislation (H.R. 872) passed the House Committee on Agriculture and went on to pass the House of Representatives on suspension. In the 113th Congress, the legislation (H.R. 935) passed both the House Committees on Agriculture and Transportation & Infrastructure by voice vote, and again, the House of Representatives. In the 114th Congress, the Zika Vector Control Act (H.R. 897) passed the House of Representatives yet again. With your help and support, H.R. 953 will also pass the House and hopefully become law.

Since H.R. 897 passed the House last year, there has been yet another costly lawsuit against a mosquito control district, forcing the district to spend its funds fighting in court instead of protecting public health.

Under these circumstances, NPDES permit requirements impact the use of critical pesticides in protecting human health and the food supply from destructive and disease-carrying pests, and in managing invasive weeds to keep open waterways and shipping lanes, to maintain rights of way for transportation and power generation, and in preventing damage to forests and recreation areas. The time and funds expended on redundant permit compliance drains public and private resources. All this for no measurable benefit to the environment. We urge you to eliminate this unnecessary, expensive, and duplicative regulation by ensuring the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017 passes the House on Wednesday.

Sincerely,

Agribusiness Council of Indiana; Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona; Agricultural Alliance of North Carolina; Agricultural Council of Arkansas; Agricultural Retailers Association; Alabama Agribusiness Council; American Farm Bureau Federation; Alabama Farmers Federation; American Mosquito Control Association; American Soybean Association; AmericanHort; Aquatic Plant Management Society; Arkansas Forestry Association; Association of Equipment

Manufacturers; Biopesticide Industry Alliance; California Agricultural Aircraft Association; California Association of Winegrape Growers; California Specialty Crops Council; Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association.

Colorado Agricultural Aviation Association; The Cranberry Institute; Crop Protection Association of North Carolina; CropLife America; Council of Producers & Distributors of Agrotechnology; Family Farm Alliance; Far West Agribusiness Association; Florida Farm Bureau Federation Florida; Fruit & Vegetable Association; Georgia Agribusiness Council; Golf Course Superintendents Association of America; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council; Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation; Idaho Grower Shippers Association; Idaho Potato Commission; Idaho Water Users Association; Illinois Farm Bureau; Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association; Iowa Agricultural Aviation Association.

Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association; Louisiana Cotton and Grain Association; Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation; Maine Potato Board; Michigan Agribusiness Association; Minnesota Agricultural Aircraft Association; Minnesota AgriGrowth Council; Minnesota Crop Production Retailers; Minnesota Pesticide Information & Education; Minor Crops Farmer Alliance; Missouri Agribusiness Association; Missouri Farm Bureau Federation; Montana Agricultural Business Association; National Agricultural Aviation Association; National Alliance of Forest Owners; National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants; National Association of Landscape Professionals; National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

National Association of Wheat Growers; National Corn Growers Association; National Cotton Council; National Council of Farmer Cooperatives; National Farmers Union; National Onion Association; National Pest Management Association; National Potato Council; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; National Water Resources Association; Nebraska Agri-Business Association; North Carolina Agricultural Consultants Association; North Carolina Cotton Producers Association; North Central Weed Science Society; North Dakota Agricultural Association; Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance; Northeastern Weed Science Society; Northern Plains Potato Growers Association; Northwest Horticultural Council; Ohio Professional Applicators for Responsible Regulation.

Oregon Association of Nurseries; Oregon Farm Bureau; Oregon Forest and Industries Council; Oregon Potato Commission; Oregon Seed Council; Oregon Water Resources Congress; Oregon Wheat Growers League; Oregonians for Food & Shelter; Pesticide Policy Coalition; Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.; Professional Landcare Network; Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment; Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association; SC Fertilizer Agrichemicals Association; South Dakota Agri-Business Association; South Texas Cotton and Grain Association; Southern Cotton Growers, Inc.; Southern Crop Production Association; Southern Rolling Plains Cotton Growers; Southern Weed Science Society.

Sugar Cane League; Texas Ag Industries Association; Texas Vegetation Management Association; United Fresh Produce Association; U.S. Apple Association; USA Rice Federation; Virginia Agribusiness Council; Virginia Forestry Association; Washington Friends of Farm & Forests; Washington State Potato Commission; Weed Science Society of America; Western Growers; Western Plant Health Association; Western Society of Weed Science; Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine; Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation; Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association; Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association; Wyoming Ag Business Association; Wyoming Crop Improvement Association; Wyoming Wheat Growers Association.

AMERICAN MOSQUITO CONTROL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON NPDES BURDEN

THE AMERICAN MOSQUITO CONTROL ASSOCIATION URGES CONGRESS TO VOTE ''YES'' ON H.R. 953, THE REDUCING REGULATORY BURDENS ACT OF 2017

From the perspective of the agencies charged with suppressing mosquitoes and other vectors of public health consequence, the NPDES burden is directly related to combatting Zika and other mosquito-transmitted diseases.

For over forty years and through both Democratic and Republican administrations, the EPA and states held that these permits did not apply to public health pesticide applications. However, activist lawsuits forced the EPA to require such permits even for the application of EPA-registered pesticides including mosquito control.

AMCA has testified numerous times to establish the burden created by this court ruling. The threat to the public health mission of America's mosquito control districts comes in two costly parts:

ONGOING COMPLIANCE COSTS

Though the activists contend that the NPDES permit has ''modest notification and monitoring requirements'' the actual experience of mosquito control districts is much different.

Initially obtaining and maintaining an NPDES permit comes at considerable expense. California mosquito control districts estimate the NPDES compliance costs for their 64 districts to be approximately $4 million dollars over six years. These costs include;

Initial amount spent by Districts determining waters subject to reporting.

Total amount spent by Districts tracking treatments to Waters of the US

Water Testing Consultants

NPDES Administration/Regulatory Consultants

Legal fees related to NPDES

Physical monitoring of larvicides—not completed by consultants

Completing annual reports

In Wyoming, there are several issues that have impacted the mosquito districts;

Record keeping requirements has redirected 2–5 % of District funds annually to permit fees and administrative costs.

The cost for acre applications of both adulticide and larvicides has increased 5 to 10-fold for some Districts. This is due primarily to the fear that local aerial applicators have regarding the citizen lawsuits. The local ag pilots have declined to fly for some of the mosquito districts in Wyoming, requiring them to go out of state to professional application companies. The City of Laramie which was able to treat for an estimated $1 per acre now pays an estimated $5–$10 per acre. This has greatly reduced the acres that can be treated with larvicide and adulticides.

In Durango, CO, the Animas Mosquito Control District reported spending over $50,000 in GPS/GIS system, maintenance and upgrades purchased to comply with an unknown annual report requirement. They spent numerous hours conducting meetings, phone calls and on the computer to clarify the annual reporting requirements, the detail necessary in annual reports, and even where to send the information.

The fact that the existence of the permit over the last 6 years has no additional environmental benefit (since pesticide applications are already governed by FIFRA) makes these taxpayer diversions from vector control unconscionable.

In a survey of mosquito control programs, 71 reported (out of 734 nationwide) that their multiyear period expenses incurred due to the NPDES permitting including operational, permitting, reporting, monitoring and other administrative costs totaled over $4 million. (This survey does not include all of the 6-year California estimate mentioned previously).

HOW COULD $4 MILLION IN NPDES COSTS BE BETTER SPENT

Seasonal field workers ($11,000 for starter), 377 employees.

Bti larvicide ($1.44/lb), 2,879,738 pounds.

Acres of water larvicided aerially (10 lbs/acre + $5.25 applicator cost = $19.65), 211,034 acres.

Acres of water treated by ground crews (10 lbs./acre), 287,973 acres.

West Nile virus—in house testing of adult mosquitoes (RAMP) $19.36, 214,195 tests.

30 second radio ads for public education ($40–$200), 103,671–20,734.

Acres of aerial adult mosquito control ($.89 applicator fee + $.95 chemical), 2,253,708 acres.

Evening ground spraying hours ($396/hr. for vehicle, employee, adulticide), 10,472 hrs.

Every dollar spent on duplicative regulations is a dollar that could have been used towards Integrated Pest Management (IPM) activities that control mosquitoes and prevent mosquito-borne illness.

Resources must not be diverted from these mosquito control activities in order to protect public health:

Disease surveillance—trapping and testing adult mosquitoes, monitoring dead birds.

Larvicides and adult mosquito control—reduce mosquito populations through targeted applications

Habitat modification/source reduction—ditching/dredgers to permanently reduce mosquito oviposition habitats to reduce the need for chemical control measures.

Monitoring invasive species of mosquitoes.

Public education—publications on reducing backyard sources of mosquitoes, information on repellent and personal protective measures.

Employees, training, and certifications.

Programs that are most affected:

Poorer, rural mosquito control districts

Programs associated with small municipalities

In the Western US, those associated with private aerial contractors concerned with taking on the added liability.

Municipalities in the south looking to start Zika virus control efforts. Why would Congress approve $1.1 Billion to fight and explore Zika virus and then burden us with regulations that hinder our ability to control the vector of the disease?

So, why would the activist organizations be so adamant that these permits be mandatory for public health pesticide applications . . . ?

EXPOSURE TO ACTIVIST LITIGATION

Municipal mosquito control programs are vulnerable to CWA citizen lawsuits where fines to mosquito control districts may exceed $37,500/day. Under FIFRA, the activists would need to demonstrate that the pesticides were misapplied, that the product labels were not followed. Additionally, this is not a question of the applications causing harm to public health. The pesticides we use are specific to mosquitoes and are generally used in very low doses by qualified applicators).

However, the CWA 3rd Party Citizen Suit Provision allows for any third party to sue for alleged violations of NPDES program requirements. Additionally, the CWA does not require actual evidence of a misapplication of a pesticide or harm to the environment,

but rather simple paperwork violations or merely allegations in permit oversight.

The Toledo Area Sanitary District is currently involved in a lawsuit that has already initially cost the mosquito control program more than $40,000 in legal fees, and the case has yet to go to court. This could lead to an injunction on the spray program and end up costing taxpayers $100,000+ dollars, even though the case has nothing to do with substantive water quality issues, but rather focuses on alleged administrative paperwork violations.

Gem County Mosquito Abatement District (ID) was the subject of one of these activist lawsuits utilizing the 3rd Party Citizen Suit Provision. It took ten years and the grand total of an entire year's annual operating budget ($450,000) to resolve that litigation against that public health entity.

These ongoing compliance costs and threat of crushing litigation directly impact mosquito control districts. The existence of this unnecessary requirement for mosquito control activities is directly related to our ability to combat the vectors related to Zika. It diverts precious resources away from finding and suppressing mosquito populations.

The American Mosquito Control Association urges Congress to vote ''YES'' on H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017.

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION,
Washington, DC, May 24, 2017.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. BOB GIBBS,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. GARRET GRAVES,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPS. SHUSTER, GIBBS, CONAWAY AND GRAVES: Later this week, the House is expected to vote on H.R. 953, ''The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017.'' This legislation has previously passed the House of Representatives with strong bipartisan support, and the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) urges all members of Congress to vote in favor of the bill.

H.R. 953 is narrowly crafted to clarify that lawful use of pesticides in or near navigable waters is not excessively covered under two statutes, the Clean Water Act and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. In doing so, the measure simply codifies EPA's longstanding interpretation of the law before it was thrown into confusion by a 2009 court ruling, which imposed an additional layer of needless red tape on pesticide applicators. H.R. 953 corrects the duplicative requirements associated with EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) pesticide permit by specifying that NPDES permits are not needed for the lawful application of EPA-labeled pesticides. This is an important fix that will reduce red tape and legal liabilities associated with the lawful use of pesticides in protecting public health and food security.

We urge all members to vote in favor of the ''Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017.''

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

ZIPPY DUVALL,
President.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I also include in the RECORD a letter from the National Association of Counties. NACo recommends that Congress address some of challenges posed by the EPA's Clean Water Act permit for pesticides to allow counties to more quickly respond to the mosquito-based public health threats. Counties have reported either significantly scaled back or discontinued mosquito abatement programs due to the additional, duplicative, and expensive paperwork and monitoring obligations required by the program.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES,
Washington, DC, May 21, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: As the U.S. House of Representatives moves forward with the ''Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017'' (H.R. 953), we would like to highlight the impact that U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Pesticide General Permit (PGP) program has on county governments' ability to respond promptly and effectively to emerging public health threats.

As the summer months approach and we enter mosquito season, counties are concerned about the health and safety impacts of mosquito-borne illnesses such as Zika. The Zika virus is an emerging mosquito-borne illness, primarily stemming from the bite of infected Aedes mosquitoes, and there is no vaccine. Since mosquitos and their breeding habitats pose the largest threat to public safety, counties can play a major role in minimizing the potential spread of the virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses through public education and mosquito eradication.

However, since EPA's PGP program was instituted in 2011, counties have reported that they have either significantly scaled back or discontinued mosquito abatement programs due to additional, duplicative and expensive paperwork and monitoring obligations required under the permit. We recommend that Congress address some of the challenges posed by EPA's PGP permit to allow counties to more quickly respond to mosquito-based public health threats.

We thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you on issues important to counties.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW D. CHASE,
Executive Director,
National Association of Counties.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I thank the Agriculture Committee chairman, MIKE CONAWAY; and the Transportation and Infrastructure chairman, BILL SHUSTER, who are the leadership on this issue. I want to thank the Agriculture Committee ranking member, COLLIN PETERSON, as well.

Mr. Chair, I urge all Members to support this commonsense effort to reform this duplicative EPA regulation.

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

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 953, Reducing the Regulatory Burdens Act. As I have noted before on similar bills in the past, I remain concerned that this bill would mean that no Clean Water Act protections would be required for pesticide application to water bodies that are already impaired by pesticides.

The Clean Water Act in no way hinders, delays, or prevents the use of approved pesticides for pest control operations. In fact, the Clean Water Act permit provides a specific emergency provision to prevent outbreaks of diseases such as Zika virus.

Under the terms of the permit, pesticide applicators are covered automatically under the permit and any spraying may be performed immediately for any declared pest emergency situations. In most instances, sprayers are only required to notify EPA of their spraying operations 30 days after the beginning of a spraying operation.

Most pesticide applications in the United States are done in accordance with FIFRA, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act which only requires proper labeling on pesticide products regarding usage.

However, FIFRA labeling is no substitute for ensuring that we understand the volumes of pesticide we seem to apply to our rivers, our lakes, our streams on an annual basis.

□ 1515

According to a 2006 USGS report on pesticides, commonly used pesticides frequently are present in streams and groundwater at levels that exceed human health benchmarks and occur in many streams at levels that may affect aquatic or fish-eating wildlife and also human life.

In the data that the States provide the EPA, more than 16,000 miles of rivers and streams, 1,380 of bays and estuaries, and 370,000 acres of lakes in the United States are currently impaired or threatened by pesticides.

The EPA suggests that these estimates may be low because many of these States do not test for or monitor all the different pesticides that are currently being used. I am very concerned of the effect these pesticides have on the health of our rivers, our streams, and especially the drinking water supplies for all our citizens, especially the most vulnerable, the young, the elderly, and the poor and disenfranchised people who have no representation. We have much cancer appearing, and we have no idea what it is. Adding pesticides is not helping.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD a Federal report on how pesticides in California are the leading cause of impairments to water quality.

U.S. EPA REPORT ON CALIFORNIA WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT

CALIFORNIA CAUSES OF IMPAIRMENT FOR REPORTING YEAR 2012

Pesticides are the Cause of water impairment in California for 4,534 miles of rivers and streams, 235,765 acres of lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, 829 square miles of bays and estuaries, 35 miles of coastal shoreline, 42 square miles of ocean and near coastal waters, and 43 acres of wetlands.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Currently in California there are over 4,500 miles of rivers and streams, 235,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs, and 829 square

miles of bays and estuaries in my State that are impaired by pesticides. This is a significant concern in my home State, where every drop of water has to be cleaned and needs to be conserved, reused, and cherished.

We hear that pesticide application is already regulated under FIFRA and that the Clean Water Act review is not needed. I understand the concerns about the duplication of effort and the need to minimize the impacts that regulations have on small business or business at large. All the supporters are mostly farmers and other business entities.

However, I am still very concerned that these pesticides are having a very significant impact on water quality and that, with this bill, we are creating the exemption from water quality protection requirements without considering the impacts to the waters that are already impacted by pesticides, as they are in California.

This, in turn, costs our water users, our ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars to filter these pollutants out of water before it is potable. This is something I deal with on an ongoing basis as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment. We currently have aquifers that are contaminated by the continued use of pesticides and fertilizers. Millions of dollars have been spent on the 20-plus-year-long cleanup effort of a Superfund site in my area that has pesticides as one of the contaminants.

We cannot, and should not, take away one of the only tools available to monitor for adverse impacts of pesticides in our rivers, our streams, and our reservoirs. Over the past 6 years, this tool has been reasonable, has been workable to pest control operators and agricultural interests alike, and needs to be retained. I urge my colleagues on both sides to vote ''no'' on this bill.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise today also in support of H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017. The House Committee on Agriculture, which I serve on, as does Chairman GIBBS, passed this bill out of committee every Congress since the 112th Congress. The bill language was likewise included in the 2012 farm bill, reported out of the committee, as well as in the 2013 farm bill the House sent to conference. It was also included in the committee-reported text of the FY 2012 Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. But it has never reached the President's desk.

For more than 100 years, the Federal Government has administered its responsibilities under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, FIFRA, to review and register pesticides in a responsible way that protects human health and the environment.

Under the Clean Water Act, the EPA or a State authority issues a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, NPDES permit, and that regulates the discharge of pollutants. NPDES permits specify limits on what pollutants may be discharged from point sources and in what amounts. Since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, the EPA has interpreted its responsibilities related to pesticide use such that compliance with FIFRA would mitigate the need for duplicative permitting under the Clean Water Act.

As litigation in the early part of this decade began to challenge this interpretation, the EPA ultimately responded with the promulgation of a regulation on November 27, 2006, to clarify how these two laws operated. Under the EPA's final rule, the Agency codified its earlier interpretation that permits for pesticide application under the Clean Water Act were unnecessary where pesticides were used in accordance with their regulation under FIFRA.

Following the finalization of this regulation, the rule was challenged in numerous jurisdictions. The case was ultimately heard in the Sixth Circuit wherein the government's interpretation of the interaction of these two laws was not given the deference we would normally expect. The final court order nullified the EPA's regulation and imposed what is viewed as a burdensome, costly, and duplicative permitting process under the Clean Water Act for literally millions of pesticide applications.

This order has imposed a burden on the EPA, State regulatory agencies, and pesticide applicators, costing our economy in terms of jobs as well as severely threatening the already critical budgetary situation facing governments at all levels. It is particularly unfortunate that this court order imposed a new requirement that has imperiled our water resource boards, our mosquito control boards, and our forestry and agricultural sectors, yet has provided no additional environmental or public health protection. On the contrary, by imposing this costly burden on public health pesticide users, it has jeopardized public health as it relates to protection against insect-borne diseases such as the Zika virus, West Nile virus, various forms of encephalitis, and Lyme disease.

I recently heard from the Macon County Mosquito Abatement District in my district based in and around Decatur, Illinois. They can attest that the price of complying with NPDES permitting is very high. Though they had in place a reliable system of tracking chemical usage and treatment areas for years, the added burden of the NPDES requirements have caused them to spend a large portion of the district's annual budget on software strictly just for compliance and reporting processes. The recurring yearly fees associated with the software are a never-ending burden needlessly placed on abatement districts. The fear of litigation dictates the detailed tracking of EPA-approved products and diverts those funds from their actual purpose of controlling mosquitoes.

The EPA has provided technical assistance to draft this very narrow legislation. The goal of this legislation has been to address only those problems created by the decision of the Sixth Circuit and to be entirely consistent with the policy of the EPA, as stated in their November 27, 2006, final rule governing application of pesticides to waters of the United States in compliance with FIFRA.

I urge all Members to vote for this legislation.

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

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 953, Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017. This legislation eliminates the requirement to acquire two permits for the same pesticide application under two separate laws and, I might add, if you live in California, there is a separate requirement under the California Clean Water Act that requires an additional permit. That would still apply regardless if this legislation is passed.

In order to be permitted to use a pesticide, that pesticide must be approved under FIFRA, which includes an analysis that must be performed that finds it will not generally cause unreasonable adverse effects to the environment or to the health. However, current law requires another permit to be acquired for the same action under the Clean Water Act if you happen to be close to a water body, and that is where the duplication occurs.

Not only are these requirements redundant, they are expensive, and the cost of the individual Clean Water Act permit ranges from $150,000 to $270,000 and can take up to 2 years. No one wants to risk human health, not I, not anyone, but in my opinion this would not do so. We have Zika, we have West Nile, and we have a host of spreading of these diseases by mosquitoes in which this, in fact, can address those issues.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this bill in order to remove this unnecessary, unneeded regulatory burden and expense.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, we agree that no one thinks this bill is going to harm anyone. We are trying to look for commonsense provisions, and I am thankful to my colleague for making this a bipartisan solution.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO).

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for yielding me just a moment to speak on the absolute necessity of passing the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act. The Sixth Circuit Court blatantly overstepped its authority in directing the EPA to establish a

duplicative permitting process for pesticide use. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, known as FIFRA, already requires the EPA to review the data and evaluate risks and exposures associated with the use of certain insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and rodenticides.

After the EPA evaluates the risk associated with the use of a given pesticide, FIFRA prohibits its use for any purpose not already approved by the EPA. Approved uses are clearly labeled. Requiring additional reviews under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System is simply unnecessary and burdensome.

Furthermore, unless the body sets the record straight and overturns the Sixth Circuit decision, we will be opening a tried-and-true permitting process to numerous citizen lawsuits that will be bad for agriculture and, as all such bad decisions, result in increased costs paid for by the American consumers.

I urge my colleagues to stand behind Mr. GIBBS and this bill, stand behind the science, and help him pass this. When he came, he started to work on this in 2010, his hair was brown. Now it is gray. So let's help him get this bill passed.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON).

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to support the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017. This bill would restore congressional intent regarding the relationship between FIFRA and the Clean Water Act.

Historically, Congress has viewed FIFRA as sufficient to protect human health and the environment. Until the early part of the past decade, even the EPA interpreted its responsibilities related to pesticide use as compliance with FIFRA would reduce the need for duplicative permitting under the Clean Water Act. If pesticides were used according to their regulation under FIFRA, then permits for pesticide application under the Clean Water Act were unnecessary.

Unfortunately, this historic interpretation has been overturned by activist litigation. In 2009, a decision by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upended the historic interpretation of the space between these two laws. The Sixth Circuit order created a new permitting requirement that provides no additional environmental or public health protection.

The goal of this legislation has been to address only those problems created by the Sixth Circuit decision and to be consistent with congressional intent and the EPA's long-held interpretation. It is a commonsense solution to a court-imposed regulatory burden that Congress never intended to be applied. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate my colleague and friend from Minnesota for his bipartisan support of H.R. 953.

Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), the majority whip.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Chairman, I want to first thank my colleague from Ohio for his leadership on bringing forth this important legislation to actually help us focus more resources on killing mosquitoes, especially as the mosquito season starts, as we see so many threats with Zika, with West Nile, just the damage that we see happening around our country from mosquitoes. We have decided we are going to put resources into killing mosquitoes, and then we come about and find out about these regulations that were imposed by the courts in a way that actually makes it harder for us to kill mosquitoes.

□ 1530

What you hear so often from people around the country is: Why is it that you have got things happening out of Washington that make no sense?

Congressman GIBBS identified one of those areas and said it really doesn't make sense. We tried to work through a different remedy to try to get the administration to fix it, and they pointed to a court case that keeps them from fixing it.

It is one of the big frustrations you have that it actually takes an act of Congress to bring common sense into the process of killing mosquitoes, for goodness sake. But here we are doing it. At least we are spending the people's business doing something that actually injects common sense back into the things that people do in their daily lives.

All across our community and across this country, you have local governments that are really the ones that focus on killing mosquitoes, and we started hearing about this problem. Of course, Mr. Chairman, we asked the EPA to identify just how much this is actually costing.

So as everybody scrambles and fights and you hear agencies saying ''I need more money to do this,'' ''I need more money to do that,'' we need to be more responsible with the taxpayers' money, and people are saying, ''Live within your means.''

And we have asked the EPA. The EPA, Mr. Chairman, told us that the cost of implementing these EPA regulations is an extra $50 million a year. Think of how ludicrous that is. Because of the way the EPA is implementing the law, as we are trying to kill more mosquitoes, it is costing $50 million a year to comply with burdensome, duplicative regulations—rather than killing mosquitoes. We should be spending that money, $50 million, killing more mosquitoes, not killing trees to comply with ridiculous regulations.

So I want to commend my colleague from Ohio for bringing this back. The House passed this in a very bipartisan way last Congress. We didn't get it all the way to the President's desk. So this year, hopefully, we will get this bill not only passed through the House, but through the Senate and to President Trump's desk, where he will sign a bill that injects common sense back into the process of killing mosquitoes.

Let's spend our money killing mosquitoes, not killing trees and having to comply with ridiculous regulations that come out of Washington and make no sense. Let's pass this bill.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, this is the fifth time the United States House of Representatives has considered this bill.

Now, we have heard a lot of alternative facts today. Let's have some real facts.

Killing trees, well, first off, here is the extensive application. It is slightly over three pages long and it can be filed electronically, so we don't need to kill any trees.

Allegations that somehow this slows down control of mosquito abatement or Zika virus are absolutely false. Anybody can apply a pesticide in a public health situation. They have 30 days to file the paperwork online afterwards. It takes about 5 minutes. It has such technical things as your name and address, your pesticide applicator license verified with a certain State, where you are going to use the pesticide or herbicide.

Now, why would we want to know that? Or maybe, why wouldn't we want not to know that? Because that is what they are saying on that side of the aisle.

There is nothing registered with the Department of Agriculture. Yes, we have FIFRA. These pesticides and herbicides have been registered. They have labels—it can't be applied over water; it can't be applied here; it can't be applied there—and we trust the applicators to follow those rules. But when they actually use the herbicides and pesticides absent this form, this burdensome 3½-page form, we won't know.

Now, why would we care? Well, this is essentially the 20th anniversary of a massive fish kill in Jackson County, Oregon. In that incident, an operator applied an aquatic herbicide in an irrigation canal that, when it leaked into the nearby creek, killed 92,000 steelhead. Now, we kind of care about our steelhead in the Northwest, so that was a problem.

So then the Federal agency said, Well, this is kind of a problem when someone does that, 92,000 steelhead. Plus, anybody who drank the water was poisoned, et cetera, et cetera. But we don't want to know about that on that side of the aisle because Dow Chemical doesn't like it because maybe it inhibits sales of some of these chemicals that cause these sorts of problems.

Now, we have data now because of these forms, and we know about areas

that are impaired. In my State, which is like the clean, green State, 825 miles of rivers and streams and 10,000 acres of lakes and ponds in the State of Oregon are impaired by pesticide contamination. That is something we should do something about. People are drinking that water; they are swimming in that water; their kids are bathing in that water. I think that is a problem.

But we don't want to know about that. This is just a horrible restraint on pesticide applications.

Now, we heard a lot of other hooey here. It is like: This is so difficult; it is so difficult to do. I was talking to the ranking member of the Agriculture Committee. He said, well, farmers don't want to file those forms. If they hired a pesticide applicator, that person could file the form for them.

Or, yeah, maybe they are going to have to file the 3-page form if it involves the waters of the United States of America. If it doesn't involve the waters, you don't have to file it. So this is really an incredible thing.

Now, we have taken this up numerous times. It was the Pest Management and Fire Suppression Flexibility Act in the 109th Congress—the same bill, exactly the same bill.

Then in the 112th and the 113th Congresses, it was the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act. It still didn't work. It didn't become law then.

Well, wait a minute. Let's pass it on to public fears. Last Congress, it was called the Zika Vector Control Act in the 114th Congress. We just heard a lot of hooey about how this will inhibit killing mosquitoes, which, of course, is absolutely not true.

But now we are back to here. So the Zika Control Act and the Pest Management and Fire Suppression Flexibility Act are now back to the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act.

Now, in the past 6 years, since this paperwork was required, or electronic work, do you know how many pesticide applicators have faced significant impacts because of these protections? None. Zero.

Do you know how many applicators have raised problems with the Clean Water Act pesticide general permit to EPA? None. Zero.

In fact, I specifically asked this question of the EPA's head of water at a Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee hearing. No specific instances where the clean water permit was causing problems or impacts on pesticide application. Yet here we are again, one more time, under the guise of reducing this horrible regulatory burden: name, address, phone number, what did you apply? Where are you registered to apply these sorts of permits? That is useful information.

I had a couple more instances in Oregon.

Tiller, Oregon, again, right in the same area where the steelhead were killed. That same creek was contaminated with atrazine in 2014. Local residents who drank the water complained, and they also complained of the overspray. Then, in 2013, a helicopter in Curry County, Oregon, oversprayed residents.

Now, if they didn't have to file these forms, we wouldn't know who did it, when they did it, and what the chemical was. I guess that is kind of what the Republicans want. If someone oversprays your property and sprays stuff on you: ''Geez, I don't know. That was one of those black helicopters. We don't know where it came from, or who that was. We don't know what they dumped on you. Sorry.'' That is burdensome paperwork. We wouldn't want to require that kind of burdensome paperwork.

So that is why we are here again today for the fifth time with the fifth remaining rationale for what we are doing here today, and it still fails the smell test.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time each side has remaining.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Ohio has 10 minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from California has 16 minutes remaining.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to make a few remarks on what my friend, my colleague from Oregon said. I call it the rest of the story.

We talked about the fish kill in 1996 of the steelhead. I inquired of this tragic incident and came to the conclusion that NPDES permitting under the Clean Water Act would not have prevented the fish kill.

In 2003, the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs published a report which looked at this potential risk posed by the herbicide that was used in the 1996 fish kill. The report stated:

> Where sufficient information has been provided, it appears that the fish incidents are as a result of misuse. The form of misuse is that water was released from the irrigation canals too early. In some cases, this was because the gate valves were not properly closed or that they leaked. In other cases, the applicator opened them intentionally, but too soon. In one case, boards that helped contain the irrigation canal water may have been removed by children playing.

The EPA goes on in the report to address each of the various species of salmon and steelhead analyzed and repeatedly states:

> It is very unlikely the pesticide suspected to cause the Oregon fish kill would have affected the steelhead or salmon if it was used in accordance with the label requirements. Completing NPDES permit paperwork and paying a permit fee does not prevent fish kills, nor does it improve water quality. Pesticide applications in accordance with FIFRA pesticide labels will avoid adverse environmental impacts, including fish kills.

If a pesticide is improperly applied, there are enforcement mechanisms in place to address this violation. In the case of the 1996 Oregon fish kill, I understand the party was subject to more than $400,000 in fines and reimbursements for the incident.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his work on this important legislation.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act. This legislation will bring much-needed relief to our American farmers. They put in a great deal of time and money to deal with duplicative regulations like the one we are addressing here today. This bill will take away needless provisions regarding pesticide regulations under the Clean Water Act.

Pesticide applications are already federally regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. This permitting was unnecessary and duplicative, punishing American farmers due to a misguided court decision.

In my district in Georgia, farmers have to deal with a variety of environmental difficulties, like the devastating freeze just this last March. The Federal Government should not be adding redundant mandates to already overburdened farmers.

The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act has been passed out of the House Agriculture Committee five times. It is time for Congress to correct this mistake and give farmers and pesticide applicators much-needed relief once and for all.

Mr. Chairman, as a proud cosponsor of this bill, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD the following letters to be made part of today's record: A letter from 46 national and State conservation and public health interest groups opposed to H.R. 953, and, secondly, a list of over 150 different organizations who oppose efforts to undermine the Clean Water Act protections for direct pesticide applications, including the Alabama Rivers, San Francisco, and the list goes on.

And the organizations: Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments; from Alaska, the Alaska Community Action on Toxics; From Arkansas, the Earth Cause Organization; from California, Audubon and many others; from Alabama, Alabama Rivers; from Colorado, Colorado Riverkeeper; from the District of Columbia, Potomac Riverkeeper; from Florida, Emerald Coastkeeper; from Georgia, Altamaha Riverkeeper and Altamaha Coastkeeper; from Idaho, the Idaho Conservation League; from Illinois, the Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited; and from Iowa, Quad Cities Riverkeeper. And the list goes on, Mr. Chairman.

MAY 22, 2017.

Re Oppose H.R. 953 (Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017).

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to oppose H.R. 953 (''Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017''). A

more apt title for this damaging legislation is the ''Poison Our Waters Act'' because it would eliminate Clean Water Act safeguards that protect our waterways and communities from excessive pesticide pollution. The Pesticide General Permit targeted in this legislation has been in place for nearly six years now and alarmist predictions by pesticide manufacturers and others about the impacts of this permit have failed to bear any fruit.

This bill is the same legislation that pesticide manufacturers and other special interests have been pushing for years. It has been opposed not only by the Obama Administration. but also more than 150 public health, fishing, and conservation organizations (see attached list). Contrary to earlier claims made by its proponents, this bill will not improve nor impact spraying to combat Zika virus and other human health threats. The Pesticide General Permit at issue already allows for spraying to combat vector-borne diseases such as Zika and the West Nile virus. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the permit ''provides that pesticide applications are covered automatically under the permit and may be performed immediately for any declared emergency pest situations'' (emphasis added).

Further, the Clean Water Act has no significant effect on farming practices. The Pesticide General Permit in no way affects land applications of pesticides for the purpose of controlling pests (that is, spraying that doesn't discharge into water bodies). Irrigation return flows and agricultural stormwater runoff do not require permits, even when they contain pesticides. Existing agricultural exemptions in the Clean Water Act remain.

Repealing the Pesticide General Permit—as this damaging legislation seeks to do—would allow pesticides to be discharged into water bodies without any meaningful oversight since the federal pesticide registration law (the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)) does not require tracking of such applications.

Now that the Pesticide General Permit is in place, the public is finally getting information that they couldn't obtain before about the types of pesticides being sprayed or discharged into local bodies of water. All across the country, pesticide applicators are complying with the Pesticide General Permit to protect water quality without issue,

The Pesticide General Permit simply lays out commonsense practices for applying pesticides directly to waters that currently fall under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. Efforts to block this permit are highly controversial, as evidenced by the attached list of groups opposed.

Please protect the health of your state's citizens and all Americans by opposing H.R. 953.

Sincerely,

Earthjustice
League of Conservation Voters
Natural Resources Defense Council
Center for Biological Diversity
Sierra Club
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Sustainable Business Council
National Family Farm Coalition
Waterkeeper Alliance
Clean Water Action
Environment America
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
American Rivers
Southern Environmental Law Center
Defenders of Wildlife
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Environmental Working Group
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides
Alabama Rivers Alliance
Beyond Pesticides
Beyond Toxics
Cahaba River Society
Center for Food Safety
Defend H2O
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information Center
Gulf Restoration Network
Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited Kentucky
Waterways Alliance
Klamath Forest Alliance
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Program in Nutrition, Teachers College Columbia University
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Oregon Environmental Council
Prairie Rivers Network
Pesticide Action Network North America
PolicyLink
San Francisco Baykeeper
Save The River / Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper
The Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change
The Good Food Institute
Toxic Free NC
Turtle Island Restoration Network
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
WildEarth Guardians.

WHO OPPOSES EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE CLEAN WATER ACT PERMITTING FOR DIRECT PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS?

The below organizations have signed letters opposing legislation that guts Clean Water Act safeguards protecting communities from toxic pesticide.

NATIONAL

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, American Bird Conservancy, American Rivers, American Sustainable Business Council, Beyond Pesticides, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Center for Environmental Health, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment, Clean Water Action, Clean Water Network, Defend H2O, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, Endangered Habitats League, Endangered Species Coalition, Environment America, Environmental Working Group, Food & Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, Geos Institute, League of Conservation Voters, National Environmental Law Center, National Family Farm Coalition, Natural Resources Defense Council, Pesticide Action Network North America, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, Sierra Club, The Good Food Institute, WildEarth Guardians.

ALABAMA

Alabama Rivers Alliance, Black Warrior Riverkeeper, Cahaba River Society, Hurricane Creekkeeper/Friends of Hurricane Creek.

ALASKA

Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Cook Inletkeeper, Inc.

ARKANSAS

The Earth Cause Organization.

CALIFORNIA

Audubon California, Better Urban Green Strategies, Butte Environmental Council, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, Californians for Alternatives to Toxics, Californians for Pesticide Reform, Coast Action Group, Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club, Environment California, Environmental Protection Information Center, Friends of Five Creeks, Friends of Gualala River, Friends of the Petaluma River, Golden Gate Audubon Society, Humboldt Baykeeper, Inland Empire Waterkeeper, Klamath Forest Alliance, Klamath Riverkeeper, L.A. Waterkeeper, Lawyers for Clean Water, Madrone Audubon Society, Northern California River Watch, Orange County Coastkeeper, Pesticide Watch, Pesticide-Free Sacramento, Pesticide-Free Zone, Planning and Conservation League, Russian River Watershed Protection Committee, Russian Riverkeeper, Sacramento Audubon Society, Inc., Safe Alternatives for Our Forest Environment, Safety Without Added Toxins, San Diego Coastkeeper, San Francisco Baykeeper, San Francisco League of Conservation Voters, San Francisco Tomorrow, Stop the Spray East Bay, The Bay Institute, Turtle Island Restoration Network.

COLORADO

Colorado Riverkeeper.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Potomac Riverkeeper.

FLORIDA

Emerald Coastkeeper, Indian Riverkeeper, Miami Waterkeeper, St. Johns Riverkeeper, Choctawhatchee Riverkeeper, Apalachicola Riverkeeper.

GEORGIA

Altamaha Riverkeeper and Altamaha Coastkeeper, Ogeechee Riverkeeper, Satilla Riverkeeper, Savannah Riverkeeper.

IDAHO

Idaho Conservation League, Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper, Saint John's Organic Farm, Silver Valley Waterkeeper.

ILLINOIS

Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited, Prairie Rivers Network.

IOWA

Quad Cities Riverkeeper.

KANSAS

Kansas Riverkeeper.

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Waterways Alliance.

LOUISIANA

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, Louisiana Bayoukeeper, Ouachita Riverkeeper.

MAINE

Casoco Baykeeper.

MARYLAND

Gunpowder Riverkeeper, Patuxent Riverkeeper, West/Rhode Riverkeeper, Assateague Coastkeeper/Assateague Coastal Trust.

MICHIGAN

Detroit Riverkeeper, Flint Riverkeeper, Grand Traverse Baykeeper.

MISSOURI

Saint Louis Confluence Riverkeeper.

MONTANA

Big Blackfoot Riverkeeper.

NEBRASKA

Western Nebraska Resources Council.

NEW JERSEY

Hackensack Riverkeeper, Inc., Raritan Riverkeeper.

NEW YORK

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, Environmental Advocates, Hudson Riverkeeper, Lake George Waterkeeper, Long Island Soundkeeper, Peconic Baykeeper, Save The River/Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper.

NORTH CAROLINA

Toxic Free NC, Watauga Riverkeeper.

OKLAHOMA

Grand Riverkeeper.

OREGON

Beyond Toxics, Forestland Dwellers, Northwest Environmental Defense Center, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Wild, Rogue Riverkeeper, Tualatin Riverkeepers.

PENNSYLVANIA

Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston Waterkeeper, Santee Riverkeeper.

TENNESSEE

Tennessee Riverkeeper.

TEXAS

Galveston Baykeeper.

VIRGINIA

Blackwater Nottoway Riverkeeper Program, Shenandoah Riverkeeper.

WASHINGTON

Puget Soundkeeper Alliance, Spokane Riverkeeper.

WEST VIRGINIA

Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

INTERNATIONAL

Waterkeeper Alliance, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Northcoast Environmental Center, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Northwest Center for Alternatives for Pesticides, Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition.

SOUTH

Southern Environmental Law Center, Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation, Gulf Restoration Network.

NORTHEAST

Housatonic River Initiative, Toxics Action Center, New York/New Jersey Baykeeper.

MID-ATLANTIC

Assateague Coastkeeper/Assateague Coastal Trust.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, there is one other thing that I want to bring to the attention of this committee. One of the potential human health applications related to unregulated discharges to water is drinking water.

In May of 2017, the Natural Resources Defense Council released a report entitled, ''Threats on Tap,'' that documented potentially harmful contaminants in tap water in every State of the Union. This report, based on information obtained from State and local public drinking water utilities, documented tens of thousands of drinking water violations related to chemicals and other contaminants currently found in our domestic water supply.

The report included a focus on synthetic organic compounds commonly found in a wide variety of products, from household cleaners to industrial, commercial, and agricultural products, including pesticides and herbicides regulated under FIFRA.

□ 1545

According to this report, human exposure to these contaminants can lead to cancers—I repeat, lead to cancers—developmental effects, central nervous system, and reproductive difficulties, endocrine issues, or liver and kidney problems.

According to an appendix of this report, which I include in today's RECORD, in 2015, there were 6,864 drinking water violations associated with synthetic organic compounds, potentially affecting as many as 2.6 million drinking water users. Of these, a number were for direct, health-related violations affecting more than 300,000 individuals. This report documented ongoing drinking water violations for the worst of the worst pesticides in terms of human health effects, including, atrazine, chlordane, endrin, and glyphosate.

Mr. Chairman, thanks to this report, we have more information on exactly where these drinking water violations are occurring and how increased use of pesticides on or near water increases the risk that humans will be exposed to these dangerous chemicals when they turn on the tap; which begs the question: Why the proponents of this bill want to reduce the public disclosure and monitoring requirements of the Clean Water Act relating to pesticide applications?

Do these proponents want to let these pesticide applications and chemical companies go back in the shadows where information on the release of pesticides is no longer known?

I include in the RECORD a list of chemicals and their potential health impact.

SYNTHETIC ORGANIC CHEMICALS REGULATED BY THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Chemical, Source, Potential Health Impact, MCL (PPB), MCLG (PPB), Number of Violations in 2015 are as follows: 2,3,7,8-TCDD (dioxin), Emissions from waste incineration and other combustion; discharge from chemical factories, Reproductive difficulties; increased risk of cancer, 0.00003, 0, 124; 2,4,5-TP, Residue of banned herbicide, Liver problems, 50, 50, 214; 2,4-D, Runoff from herbicide used on row crops, Kidney, liver, or adrenal gland problems; possible cancer risk, 70, 70, 232; Alachlor, Runoff from herbicide used on row crops, Eye, liver, kidney, or spleen problems; anemia; increased risk of cancer, 2, 0, 0; Aldicarb, Runoff/leaching from pesticides, Nausea, diarrhea, and relatively minor neurological symptoms, 3, 1, 32; Aldicarb sulfone, Runoff/leaching from pesticides, Nausea, diarrhea, and relatively minor neurological symptoms, 2, 1, 32; Aldicarb sulfoxide, Runoff/leaching from pesticides, Nausea, diarrhea, and relatively minor neurological symptoms, 4, 1, 32; Atrazine, Runoff from herbicide used on row crops, Cardiovascular system or reproductive problems; possible cancer risk, 3, 3, 263; Benzo(a)pyrene, Leaching from linings of water storage tanks and distribution lines, Reproductive difficulties; increased risk of cancer, 0.2, 0, 246; Carbofuran, Leaching of soil fumigant used on rice and alfalfa, Problems with blood, nervous system, or reproductive system, 40, =40, 255.

Chlordane, Residue of banned termiticide, Liver or nervous system problems; increased risk of cancer, 2, 0, 255; DBCP (1,2-dibromo-3-chloropropane), Runoff/leaching from soil fumigant used on soybeans, cotton, pineapples, and orchards, Reproductive difficulties, increased risk of cancer, 0.2, 0, 166; Dalapon, Runoff from herbicide used on rights-of-way, Minor kidney changes, 200, 200, 213; Di(ethylhexyl)-adipate, Discharge from chemical factories, Weight loss, liver problems, possible reproductive difficulties, 400, 400, 253; Di(ethylhexyl)-phthalate, Discharge from rubber and chemical factories, Reproductive difficulties; liver problems; increased risk of cancer, 6, 0, 286; Dinoseb, Runoff from herbicide used on soybeans and vegetables, Reproductive difficulties, 7, 7, 215; Diquat, Runoff from herbicide use, Cataracts, 20, 20, 147; EDB (ethylene dibromide), Discharge from petroleum refineries, Problems with liver, stomach, reproductive system, or kidneys; increased risk of cancer, 0.05, 0, 177; Endothall, Runoff from herbicide use, Stomach and intestinal problems, 100, 100, 150; Endrin, Residue of banned insecticide, Liver problems, 2, 2, 230.

Glyphosate, Runoff from herbicide use, Kidney problems; reproductive difficulties, 700, 700, 150; Heptachlor, Residue of banned termiticide, Liver damage, increased risk of cancer, 0.4, 0, 258; Heptachlor epoxide, Breakdown of heptachlor, Liver damage; increased risk of cancer, 0.2, 0, 258; Hexachlorobenzene, Discharge from metal refineries and agricultural chemical factories, Liver or kidney problems; reproductive difficulties; increased risk of cancer, 1, 0, 224; Hexachlorocyclopentadiene, Discharge from chemical factories, Kidney or stomach problems, 50, 50, 269; Lindane, Runoff/leaching from insecticide used on cattle, lumber, gardens, Liver or kidney problems, 0.2, 0.2, 0; Methoxychlor, Runoff/leaching from insecticide used on fruits, vegetables, alfalfa, livestock, Reproductive difficulties, 40, 40, 257; Oxamyl, Runoff/leaching from insecticide used on apples, potatoes, and tomatoes, Slight nervous system effects, 200, 200, 255; PCBs, Runoff from landfills; discharge of waste chemicals, Skin changes; thymus gland problems; immune deficiencies; reproductive or nervous system difficulties, increased risk of cancer, 0.5, 0, 214; Pentachlorophenol, Discharge from wood preserving factories, Liver or kidney problems; increased cancer risk, 1, 0, 220; Simazine, Herbicide runoff, Blood problems, 4, 4, 255; Toxaphene, Runoff/leaching from insecticide used on cotton and cattle, Kidney, liver, or thyroid problems, increased risk of cancer, 3, 0, 222.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, I just implore all our colleagues to take a good look at what this can have an effect on our general populace, I mean, the human impact, and I trust that they will vote ''no'' on this bill.

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

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In my closing, I just want to really reemphasize the importance to pass this bill and get it signed into law because the environment is at risk, human safety is at risk, human health is at risk. We have over 100 Zika outbreaks currently in the United States. We have hundreds of West Nile outbreaks. And what this bill does is it puts a tool in the toolbox for our mosquito control districts, an additional tool to help eradicate or control the mosquito population to prevent and protect human health around our citizens.

There has been a lot of talk about pesticide chemicals in the water, and some of these chemicals that have been mentioned are what we call legacy chemicals that were used years ago. As a farmer, I can tell you some of the chemicals we used when I started farming in 1975 didn't break down. They weren't biodegradable.

The industry has changed a lot. We have new chemicals, better chemicals, safer chemicals. Many of them are biodegradable. So these legacy issues are not—the contaminants in a lot of the

water today isn't from chemicals being used in today's agricultural environment, but it is from past years because those chemicals last in the environment for many years.

I think it is also important that the former Secretary of Agriculture—I stated earlier—Tom Vilsack, was very concerned about this, and he sent a letter to the EPA Administrator at the time, Lisa Jackson, that this court case doesn't do anything to help protect the environment or protect water quality in the United States, and it adds additional costs and burdens to our agricultural producers in their efforts to produce the wholesome, safe, affordable food supply to feed the world.

This is commonsense legislation, and I urge people to vote for H.R. 953. As has been said earlier, this bill has been up several other times in previous Congresses; it has had strong bipartisan support. Unfortunately, the Senate did not move on it and take action. Hopefully this time we will see that, especially with the outbreaks of Zika and West Nile and seeing the cost.

It was mentioned earlier, too, about the cost of getting the permit. Obviously, doing the permit, actually applying it probably isn't much costly, but to get all the stuff lined up, the consultants and all the paperwork they have to do to get the information there is quite costly.

We had in previous committee hearings mosquito control districts coming in and talking about the cost. The thousands of dollars they are spending has blown their budget where they could be using that to spend on mosquito eradication.

So, obviously, we have hundreds of groups around the country that support this legislation. It is needed, and I urge my colleagues to support it so we can move on and protect the environment, enhance the environment, and also human health and safety.

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

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. YOUNG of Iowa). All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–21. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 953

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 ''Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. USE OF AUTHORIZED PESTICIDES.

Section 3(f) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136a(f)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(5) USE OF AUTHORIZED PESTICIDES.—Except as provided in section 402(s) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the Administrator or a State may not require a permit under such Act for a discharge from a point source into navigable waters of a pesticide authorized for sale, distribution, or use under this Act, or the residue of such a pesticide, resulting from the application of such pesticide.''.

SEC. 3. DISCHARGES OF PESTICIDES.

Section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1342) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(s) DISCHARGES OF PESTICIDES.—

''(1) NO PERMIT REQUIREMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a permit shall not be required by the Administrator or a State under this Act for a discharge from a point source into navigable waters of a pesticide authorized for sale, distribution, or use under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or the residue of such a pesticide, resulting from the application of such pesticide.

''(2) EXCEPTIONS.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the following discharges of a pesticide or pesticide residue:

''(A) A discharge resulting from the application of a pesticide in violation of a provision of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act that is relevant to protecting water quality, if—

''(i) the discharge would not have occurred but for the violation; or

''(ii) the amount of pesticide or pesticide residue in the discharge is greater than would have occurred without the violation.

''(B) Stormwater discharges subject to regulation under subsection (p).

''(C) The following discharges subject to regulation under this section:

''(i) Manufacturing or industrial effluent.

''(ii) Treatment works effluent.

''(iii) Discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel, including a discharge resulting from ballasting operations or vessel biofouling prevention.''.

The Acting CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in House Report 115–145. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. ESTY OF CONNECTICUT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 115–145.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 3, after line 2, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent subparagraphs of the quoted matter accordingly):

''(B) A discharge that contains any active or inactive ingredient identified on the list of toxic pollutants established pursuant to section 307(a)(1) of this Act, the list of extremely hazardous substances established pursuant to section 302(a) of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 11002(a)), the list of toxic chemicals established pursuant to section 313(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 11023(c)), or the list of hazardous substances established pursuant to section 102 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9602).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 348, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017. The underlying bill is overly broad, and not only risks public health, but also endangers our agricultural lands by needlessly contaminating our water.

Let me be clear: I support eliminating unnecessary regulatory burdens. In fact, if you ask every Representative whether they support getting rid of duplicative or unnecessary regulations, you would probably get 435 yeas. However, the regulations here are far from unwarranted.

There is a compelling reason why the Environmental Protection Agency stepped in to protect the American public and our water from unnecessary harms from pesticides. Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, FIFRA, the EPA is charged with registering all pesticides that are made and sold in the United States. But FIFRA does not take into account when, where, and how pesticides are applied.

Applying a pesticide to crop land has a dramatically different consequence to the environment than when it is sprayed directly into or over or on bodies of water. So that is why, under the Clean Water Act, pesticide general permits are now required for pesticide applications in, over, or on water.

Folks are only required to apply for a pesticide general permit when they want to release biological or chemical pesticides into, over, or on waters of the United States. A PGP is often required for control of the following pests: mosquitoes, vegetation and algae, animal pests, areawide pests, and forest-canopy pests.

Now, I would like to clarify some misconceptions that we have heard discussed here this afternoon. Claims that the pesticide general permits recklessly harms American agriculture are simply not true. For 6 years now, the pesticide general permit has been in place. Farmers and forestry operators have had successful growing seasons and have provided important products to the United States around the world.

Congressional testimony has revealed no report of a pesticide applicator being unable to apply pesticide in a timely manner. Assertions that the pesticide general permit prevents us from combating the Zika virus are also untrue.

When special circumstances arise, public health outbreaks like the Zika virus or West Nile, special exemptions allow applicators to spray pesticides

and apply for permits after the fact. The post-pesticide application process is simple, and it works.

The bottom line is that limiting the amount of pesticides that are sprayed into our lakes, rivers, and streams, into our drinking water supplies, is common sense.

In my home State of Connecticut, pesticide contamination in residential drinking water has been a Statewide problem for a long time. Some of my constituents have gone for years living with stomach pain, hair loss, body numbness, skin rashes, not knowing the cause of their ailments. Test results have revealed pesticides were the cause.

That is why I stand here today to offer an amendment that would ensure that we keep existing clean water protections in place so that we can protect our waters and agricultural lands in the long run.

My amendment would retain existing Clean Water Act accountability for the most toxic chemicals and hazardous substances commonly used in pesticides today.

Should we would try to find a way to streamline the application process for a pesticide general permit?

Of course. But a blanket exemption with complete disregard for clean water, the ecosystem, and public health makes this underlying bill unwarranted and unwise.

We must work together in this Congress to protect our waterways, ensure a healthy food and water supply, while also protecting our public health.

Mr. Chair, I encourage all of my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, a couple of points I would like to make. When my colleague from Connecticut talked about spraying chemicals, pesticides over water, the EPA has full authority, full jurisdiction to restrict those pesticides, how they are used, when they are used, and also who is using them; and they can restrict it to a manner where the applicator has to have specific training. And there is nothing to stop the EPA to say that if you are going to spray over a body of water, you have to notify the EPA. The EPA has that authority. They have the jurisdiction to do that.

I think it is also interesting to mention when talking about spraying and getting a permit after the fact, yeah, that if the local entity declares an emergency, then they can go in. But my argument is that since this additional permitting requirement, this additional red tape bureaucracy is stopping the preventive programs, so we shouldn't have to get to an emergency situation where we just spray and do the permit after the fact.

But her amendment, H.R. 953 eliminates the duplicative, expansive, and unnecessary permit process, and helps free up resources for States, counties, and local governments to better combat the spread of diseases like Zika and West Nile virus. This amendment, in effect, undermines these efforts.

The amendment intends to make the bill's exemption from the Clean Water Act permitting ineffective by carving out from the bill those waters that may receive a discharge containing any one of several hundred listed chemical substances. The vast majority of substances referenced in this amendment are not even a pesticide and have nothing to do with the regulation of a pesticide.

Additionally, a discharge covered under this amendment does not have to be related in any way to the use or application of a pesticide. The net effect of this amendment is to undermine the bill based on circumstances that have nothing whatsoever to do with the use of a pesticide.

Further, the amendment would require a pesticide user to conduct extremely expensive and time-consuming monitoring. This defeats the bill's purpose of reducing the regulatory burdens. I urge Members to oppose this amendment.

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

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman has 1 minute remaining.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Chair, I yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO), the subcommittee ranking member.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY). The amendment would help ensure the protection of public health from discharges of toxic chemicals such as benzene, chlordane, and vinyl chloride.

In my view, the protection of our families and children from seemingly limitless exposure to toxic chemicals in our air and our water and our neighborhoods should be paramount, yet here we are today considering legislation to waive the simple requirement that a chemical pesticide sprayer fill out an application providing notice of where he intends to spray known toxic chemicals, such as the ones I mentioned, all known to have toxic effects on humans.

The amendment under consideration says that we should, at a minimum, disclose and monitor the dangerous chemicals for potential toxic effects. These are chemicals that Congress has already designated as ''toxic,'' ''hazardous substances,'' or ''extreme hazardous substances'' in Federal statute.

As Congress, we should want to make sure that these dangerous chemicals do not wind up in our rivers and streams, potentially contaminating our local drinking water sources and leading to greater toxic exposure by our families and children.

□ 1600

The level of protection is worth 10 minutes of time by a commercial pesticide applicator.

Mr. Chair, I approve Ms. ESTY's amendment.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I just urge the Members to oppose this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. HUFFMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 115–145.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 3, after line 13, add the following:

SEC. 4. PROTECTION OF FISHERIES.

Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this Act, shall prevent the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency or a State from requiring a permit under section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act for any discharge (as defined in such Act) that would have a negative effect on commercial, recreational, or subsistence fisheries, or on fisheries protected by Tribal treaty rights, as determined by the Administrator or the State, as applicable, based on the best available science.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 348, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to offer this amendment and to speak against the underlying bill.

Unfortunately, I wasn't serving the House in 2011 when this bill was first brought to the floor. I was here in 2014, when the bill was brought up again, twice. I was here, also, in 2016, when it was brought up twice.

This bill has gone through a number of name changes, but its intent remains the same, and that is, to allow the irresponsible application of pesticides into our Nation's waterways. Undermining the Clean Water Act, as this bill does, means taking the EPA out of the picture, blocking them from weighing in on pesticides that are

dumped into rivers, lakes, and streams, without regard to the impacts of human health, or to those who rely on recreational, commercial, and Tribal fisheries.

We know, unfortunately, that despite efforts to regulate pesticides for public health and safety, these dangerous chemicals continue to be detected in surface and groundwater bodies at dangerous levels. Impacts to fish and wildlife have been significant, and have already been devastating in some instances. Oysters, shrimp, sea trout, and redfish—four of the most important species to food webs, fishermen, and the economy along the Southeast and Gulf Coasts—have shown effects ranging from impaired survival skills, to damaged DNA, to death as a result of exposure to pesticides that have been approved for agricultural use.

In 2006, USGS released its review on pesticide occurrence and concentrations in streams and groundwater. According to this report, at least one pesticide was detected in water from all streams tested throughout the Nation. In addition, chemicals such as DDT, which has been banned in the U.S. for decades, were still showing up, found in fish tissues sampled across watersheds nationwide.

We see a similar situation at the State level. In my State of California, pesticides are among the top sources of water quality impairments in the State. 437 waterbodies are impaired by 40 different categories of pesticides. That is why commercial fishing groups oppose the underlying bill.

My amendment will ensure that we don't deny either the EPA or a State their ability to require permits for pesticide use that could have negative effects on fisheries. Let's make sure that streams and rivers that support fish are clean. Let's make sure that the fish we catch, eat, and sell are free from toxic chemicals. America's fisheries are a backbone of both sport fishing and commercial fishing industries.

The recreational sector alone accounts for more than $115 billion of our country's economy, and it employs more than 828,000 people. My amendment would protect these recreational activities, not only for current generations but for future generations of anglers to come.

By accidentally contaminating our waterways, pesticides also exacerbate the precarious status of endangered and threatened species. In 1996, the death of over 90,000 steelhead fish, 100 coho salmon, and thousands of nongame fish resulted from an herbicide called acrolein that entered the waterways in Bear Creek, Oregon. Many wild salmon stocks are now on the brink of extinction on the West Coast, and losses in such sensitive populations make recovery efforts increasingly difficult.

Pesticides can pose a dangerous threat to commercial fisheries. In 1999, a massive lobster die-off devastated the lives and livelihoods of Connecticut and New York lobstermen along the Long Island Sound, producing a multimillion-dollar settlement with pesticide manufacturers mishandling the chemical malathion.

Similar concern has brought forth proposals to regulate methoprene and resmethrin in Maine in order to protect their commercial fishery, which is worth over $700 million.

Mr. Chair, I have letters of support here for my amendment from the American Sportfishing Association, Trout Unlimited, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, the Karuk Tribe, the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Seafood Harvesters of America, and other organizations who are very interested in this amendment, and support it.

MAY 24, 2017.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As the House considers H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017, we the undersigned groups representing millions of hunters and anglers across the nation, urge you to ensure that H.R. 953 does not negatively impact water quality, fish health and the recreational fishing industry by supporting Amendment #3, sponsored by Representative Jared Huffman.

The Huffman Amendment protects fisheries and water quality by ensuring any pesticide spraying into or over waterways that would negatively impact our nation's fisheries is properly monitored and permitted. The 47 million sportsmen and women that hunt and fish each year depend on strong Clean Water Act protections to ensure thriving fish populations that are safe to eat and the Huffman amendment would ensure it continues to do so.

America's hunters and anglers contribute more than $200 billion to America's economy each year and this robust outdoor economy depends on healthy rivers, lakes, and streams. Nearly 2,000 waterways in the United States are known to be impaired because of pesticides, and, even at low levels, pesticides pose a particularly concerning threat to fish and wildlife populations. Without protective federal safeguards in place to regulate pesticides applied to our waterways, sportsmen and women will have access to fewer quality hunting and fishing opportunities.

On behalf of our millions of members and conservation-minded hunters, anglers, and wildlife enthusiasts, we urge you to support this common-sense measure to safeguard our water resources and outdoor heritage and support the Huffman amendment.

Sincerely,

BENJAMIN BULIS,
AFFTA President, American Fly Fishing Trade Association.

JOHN W. GALE,
Conservation Director, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers.

ADAM KOLTON,
Vice President, National Advocacy, National Wildlife Federation.

STEVE MOYER,
Vice President, Government Affairs, Trout Unlimited.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 23, 2017.
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of thousands of tribal, commercial, and recreational fishermen who depend on healthy fisheries for their subsistence, traditional cultural practices, businesses, and recreational enjoyment, we write to urge you to vote YES on the Huffman amendment to H.R. 953. The amendment would ensure that existing Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA) permitting requirements for point source polluters remain in place when science clearly indicates they are needed to protect fisheries.

Under §402 of the FWPCA, the Administrator of the EPA may issue permits for point source discharges of approved pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides into navigable waters, which are also inhabited by many important and valuable fish species that are worth billions of dollars to fishermen and anglers each year. H.R. 953 would eliminate the EPA's permitting authority for approved pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides discharged into navigable waters. Many of these chemicals, despite their approval for agricultural use, are known to be seriously harmful to iconic fish species including salmon and trout, jeopardizing their survival and posing a risk to the food supply.

Congressman Huffman's amendment to H.R. 953 would simply leave EPA permitting requirements in place for the dumping of pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides into our streams and rivers when they are known to pose a significant risk to fisheries. We ask that you support this amendment in order to keep America's fisheries and strong fishing traditions alive, safe, and prosperous. If you have any questions, please call Noah Oppenheim, Executive Director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

Sincerely,

Noah Oppenheim, Executive Director, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations; Leaf Hillman, Director, Department of Natural Resources, Karuk Tribe; Caleen Sisk, Chief, Winnemem Wintu Tribe; Robert Vandermark, Executive Director, Marine Fish Conservation Network; Kevin Wheeler, Executive Director, Seafood Harvesters of America; Roger Thomas, President, Golden Gate Salmon Association; Bob Rees, Executive Director, Association of Northwest Steelheaders; Linda Behnken, Executive Director, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association; Grant Putnam, President, Northwest Guides and Anglers Association; Benjamin Bulis, President, American Fly Fishing Trade Association; Lyf Gildersleeve, Owner, Flying Fish Company; Kevin Scribner, Chief Executive Officer, Forever Wild Seafood; Cynthia Sarthou, Executive Director, Gulf Restoration Network.

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION,
Portland, OR, May 23, 2017.

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

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER PELOSI: On behalf of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) and our member tribes—the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and the Nez Perce Tribe, I

would like to share our support for the amendment offered by Mr. Huffman to H.R. 953—Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017. The amendment specifically preserves the ability of the EPA Administrator or a State to require permits necessary to protect fisheries including Tribal treaty fisheries from harmful discharges of FIFRA approved pesticides.

Tribal members are justifiably concerned about the impact of water quality on the natural resources of the Columbia River system. Our member tribes' right to abundant, healthful fish is guaranteed by the 1855 treaties with the United States. A century's worth of federal court decisions has established beyond dispute that these treaty fishing rights are permanent in nature, and that they secure for the tribes the right to take all species of fish found throughout their reserved fishing areas for subsistence, ceremonial and commercial purposes. Tribal treaties are the supreme law of the land, and federal agencies and States must interpret designated uses to include subsistence fishing and must protect fishable waters. Pesticides can wreak havoc on the health of the habitat and associated food webs that support our fisheries. They can disrupt water quality conditions and the availability of natural riparian and aquatic vegetation cover as well as the abundance of aquatic invertebrates and fishes that support the growth and maturation of salmonid species. Our tribes recognize that the health and future of our tribal fisheries require clean, cold water that is free of contaminants.

Regulations should be efficient, just, and effective, and necessarily must provide the EPA and States with the authority to protect the unique habitat and food web system that is essential to the health of our tribal fisheries. Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any further questions please contact me or Dianne Barton, PhD.

Sincerely,

JAIME A. PINKHAM,
CRITFC Executive Director.

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, May 23, 2017.

Hon. JARED HUFFMAN,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HUFFMAN: On behalf of the nation's recreational fishing industry, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) would like to be on record as supporting your amendment to H.R. 953. This amendment leaves EPA permitting requirements in place for the dumping of pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides into our streams and rivers when they are known to pose a significant risk to fisheries.

America's fisheries are an economic powerhouse and the backbone of the sportfishing and commercial fishing industries. America's recreational anglers generate more than $48 billion in retail sales with a $115 billion impact on the nation's economy; creating employment for more than 828,000 people.

Our industry depends on clean water for continued healthy and abundant fisheries. There are certain chemicals used for various on-land industry operations that are known to be incredibly harmful to fish development and survival when released into waterways. The Administrator of the EPA currently enforces permitting requirements for the disposal of these chemicals into our streams and rivers. Your amendment would ensure that existing Federal Water Pollution Control Act permitting requirements for point-source polluters (§ 402) remain in place when science indicates they are needed to conserve fisheries.

''The Huffman amendment'' is needed because the original legislation, H.R. 953, would eliminate this permitting authority for all approved pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides discharged into streams and rivers; even when they are known to pose a significant risk to fisheries.

We appreciate your leadership and understanding of the importance of clean water to fishing and the outdoor recreational economy.

Sincerely,

SCOTT GUDES,
Vice President of Government Affairs.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I prefer butter on my lobster rolls, not toxic pesticides. Let's make sure that States maintain their authority to prudently protect their economies and public health from pesticide impacts.

I urge an ''aye'' vote on this amendment.

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

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, well, that was a lot of drama. Let's not lose sight that what we are trying to do in H.R. 953 is to free up the resources so States, counties, local governments can fight the mosquito population, fight Zika, fight the West Nile virus, and let our agricultural producers have the most efficient way to protect the environment, and also produce a safe, wholesome food supply.

This amendment undermines the base bill. The amendment intends to carve out from the bill those waters that have a discharge of any type. That means the way this amendment is written, any type of discharge—even if it is not a pesticide—any type of discharge, a nutrient discharge, anything would fall under this and undermines the bill. This amendment covers all types of discharges. I think that is important to mention.

In addition, most waterbodies in this country are fishable, and, therefore, subject to this amendment's carve-out. As a result, the types of discharges and waterbodies in question under this amendment do not need to be related at all to the actual regulation of a pesticide.

Further, the amendment would require that a pesticide user conduct extremely expensive and time-consuming monitoring. Moreover, the amendment's standard of any negative effect is vague and subjective and could include an effect that has nothing to do with a pesticide.

Registered pesticides already take into account aquatic species' and fisheries' health into consideration during the registration process. I think it is important that they go through a rigorous testing process, and more testing, and the EPA has full control. They can reject that. If they determine that a pesticide is environmentally harmful, or potentially harmful, they can pull that product off.

They can also restrict the product even more so, and restrict who the applicators are, and there is nothing to stop the EPA or the State EPAs to say: Before you apply a pesticide over a waterbody, you need to tell us first before you do it.

There is nothing to stop the EPA from doing that.

So all this amendment does, it defeats the bill's purpose, reducing the regulatory burdens, and I urge my Members to oppose this amendment.

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chair, I just want to point out that some States may want to put their efforts into protecting water quality and the health of their fisheries and their ecosystems, rather than just carpet-bombing waterways with pesticides.

This amendment says, those States have the authority to do that if they choose to.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO), the ranking member of the subcommittee.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 15 seconds remaining.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 15 seconds to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO).

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I totally support the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN). If this amendment is adopted, it would maintain the existing Clean Water Act general permit requirements to protect commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries, and Tribal treaty obligations. I support the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman from California has expired.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chair, I will just say that the comment about this amendment would allow States to do it, I don't think there is anything to stop the States from doing it now. If States want to do more to protect water quality in their States, I think they have the right to do that.

Under the Clean Water Act, what it says is: The States will implement and enforce the Clean Water Act under the guidance of the Federal Government, but they have to be, at the least, a standard of the Federal Government. They can exceed that standard if they want, so I don't think there is anything stopping that.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this amendment and support the underlying bill.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in House Report 115–145 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 1 by Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.

Amendment No. 2 by Mr. HUFFMAN of California.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. ESTY OF CONNECTICUT

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 191, noes 229, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 279]

AYES—191

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
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
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fitzpatrick
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.
Jones
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Lance
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
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roskam
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—229

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
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
Costa
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
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)
Jordan
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
Lewis (MN)
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nolan
Nunes
O'Halleran
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
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—10

Black
Cummings
Graves (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Kihuen
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Newhouse
Perlmutter
Swalwell (CA)

□ 1637

Messrs. WEBSTER of Florida, CHAFFETZ, WITTMAN, BANKS of Indiana, ESTES of Kansas, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Messrs. CURBELO of Florida and WOODALL changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. CLAY, Ms. MOORE, Messrs. LANCE, MEEHAN, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

(By unanimous consent, Ms. CASTOR of Florida was allowed to speak out of order.)

FIFTH ANNUAL CAPITAL SOCCER CLASSIC

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Chairman, as the co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Soccer Caucus, along with my co-chairs, Representative DON BACON, DARIN LAHOOD, and ERIC SWALWELL, I am pleased to inform the House that last night a group of bipartisan Members came together to play in the fifth annual Capital Soccer Classic, a charity benefit for the U.S. Soccer Foundation and children in underserved areas across the country.

The U.S. Soccer Foundation transforms abandoned fields and vacant lots into state-of-the-art soccer fields to create safe places where kids can play. The U.S. Soccer Foundation also partners with our local communities back home for free afterschool programs to help kids establish healthy habits: put the cellphones aside, turn off the TV, get outside, and learn good sportsmanship.

The Republican team was very tough: Congressmen DON BACON, DARIN LAHOOD, GUS BILIRAKIS, STEVE KNIGHT, ERIK PAULSEN, and DAVID VALADAO, who scored for the Republican team. We had a number of outstanding congressional staff and former professional soccer stars as well, but they were not enough for the Democratic team. The Democratic team notched a 5–3 victory to deliver this trophy for America's blue team.

Great fun was had by all. We would like to invite you to join us next year because the real winners are the kids across the country and the opportunity to be healthy and well.

Mr. BACON. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Chairman, it was an honor to be able to have a bipartisan game out there and have a good time.

Soccer keeps children in shape. Thousands and thousands of our kids get to play this every year. We also stay in shape. It also teaches them teamwork and how to follow the rules, and they become better citizens.

I had to do an ibuprofen this morning.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. HUFFMAN

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, 2-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

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

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 189, noes 230, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 280]

AYES—189

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
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
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fitzpatrick
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.
Jones
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—230

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
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
Costa
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
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)
Jordan
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nolan
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
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—11

Black
Brady (TX)
Cummings
Graves (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Kihuen
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Newhouse
Swalwell (CA)
Wilson (SC)

□ 1645

Mr. O'HALLERAN changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) having assumed the chair, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 953) to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 348, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to the bill in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. McGovern moves to recommit the bill H.R. 953 to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 4. PROTECTING AMERICAN FAMILIES FROM SPECIAL INTERESTS SEEKING TO UNDERMINE PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

This Act, including the amendments made by this Act, shall not apply to the discharge of a pesticide if the manufacturer or distributor of the pesticide has made a political contribution to the President or to any Federal official charged with registration, regulation, or approval of the use of the pesticide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I regret to say the Republicans are again bending over backwards to help corporations and the wealthiest among us while ignoring science and leaving hardworking American families to suffer the consequences. This administration's decisions have placed special interests and their financial contributions ahead of

the health and the safety of our citizens, and this Republican-led House has been complicit.

Earlier this year, a toxic chemical manufacturer convinced the Trump administration to discard decades of scientific research just so they could continue to profit off of chlorpyrifos, a pesticide that has been proven to be harmful to human beings, especially infants and children. The pesticide was well on its way to being banned by the EPA, which said, in 2015, that it could not be declared safe for human health and for the environment; but the pesticide manufacturer wrote a check for $1 million to President Trump's inaugural committee, and just weeks later, the proposed ban on the pesticide was magically reversed. It is amazing how that worked out.

What I am wondering is: Did President Trump and the Republicans in Congress think we wouldn't notice? Did they think the American people would be okay with them knowingly allowing a dangerous pesticide to be used on farms and affect our food supply? Republicans should be ashamed of this blatant disregard for the health of the families they were elected to represent.

In 2000, the EPA banned most home uses of the chemical, citing risks to children, yet it continues to be used in agriculture production across this country. Does this really sound like something that should be used on the food we feed our kids?

On the campaign trail into the White House, President Trump has made clear that he will always side with deep-pocketed polluters and corporations over the health and safety of families.

In January 2017, Dow Chemical was reported to have contributed $1 million to President Trump's inaugural committee. The CEO of Dow Chemical was a frequent guest of President-elect Trump, including at an appearance at a postelection rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In March 2017, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt signed an order reversing the ban on the pesticide.

Also in March 2017, Scott Pruitt signed an order reversing the ban on this pesticide suggesting, in a statement, that ''by reversing the previous administration's step to ban one of the most widely used pesticides in the world, we are returning to using sound science and decisionmaking rather than predetermined results.'' Public health advocacy groups strongly disagreed, not to mention conservation organizations.

Mr. Speaker, you know what? I think I trust public health experts when it comes to protecting our families over Administrator Pruitt, who sued the EPA at least 14 times as Oklahoma's attorney general opposing important protections for our air and our water. Talk about the fox guarding the henhouse.

Mr. Speaker, we were not sent here to auction off the health and safety of millions of Americans to the highest bidder. Every day the Trump administration gets more brazen with their giveaways to special interests, raising serious questions about corruption and conflicts of interest.

Donald Trump promised to drain the swamp. He has created a cesspool. We are talking about people's lives here, Mr. Speaker. This pesticide has been shown to harm women, children, and families. It has no place on our farms or in our food system. Our health should not be for sale.

It isn't hard to connect the dots here. The EPA abruptly reversed its efforts to ban a toxic chemical just weeks after the chemical's manufacturer made a political contribution to the newly elected President. And we know their decision wasn't based on science. The former head of the EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention suggested that the Trump EPA is ''ignoring the science that is pretty solid'' and putting farmworkers and exposed children at unnecessary risk.

Now, I can see how people might start to wonder whether this administration is on the side of special interests or the American people. This amendment fights back against the corrupting influence of political contributions from pesticide companies. It would ensure that existing science-based protections for our families and our environment cannot be overturned by a well-timed contribution to President Trump or to those in his administration charged with implementing the law.

The American people deserve to know that their leaders will stand up to protect their health and their safety rather than protecting the bottom line of wealthy special interests. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to do the right thing and adopt this amendment and show the American people that our government is not for sale.

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

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, this motion to recommit is unnecessary and aims to undermine the purpose of the bill.

The underlying bill, H.R. 953, eliminates the duplicative, expensive, and unnecessary permit process that helps free up the resources for our States, counties, and local governments to better combat the Zika, West Nile virus, and other diseases; but this motion, in effect, aims to undermine the bill.

In this motion, the bill says it will not apply to anybody who makes a discharge of a pesticide if they made a political contribution to the President or to any Federal official charged with registration, regulation, or approval of the use of a pesticide. That is utterly absurd. You can't make political contributions to regulators at the EPA.

Let's keep in mind that the EPA has full authority to regulate these pesticides, pull pesticides off the market, and regulate who applies them, and they have full authority to protect our water and our human health.

This amendment simply aims to gut the bill. It is unclear how it ever would work. We need to stop creating unnecessary roadblocks to the use of products that stand to protect public health and feed the Nation.

H.R. 953 is a good bill that will help protect public health and the environment and stop mosquitoes from spreading Zika and the West Nile virus and other diseases to our vulnerable populations.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this motion and urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by a 5-minute vote on passage of the bill, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 183, noes 230, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 281]

AYES—183

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
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
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal

Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—230

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
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
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
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)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
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
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—17

Black
Costa
Cummings
Davidson
Franks (AZ)
Graves (LA)
Green, Gene
Johnson, Sam
Kihuen
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Nadler
Newhouse
Sherman
Swalwell (CA)
Waters, Maxine
Wilson (SC)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1703

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 256, noes 165, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 282]

AYES—256

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Blunt Rochester
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
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)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lawson (FL)
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nolan
Nunes
O'Halleran
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
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—165

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
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
Kildee
Kilmer
Krishnamoorthi
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—9

Black
Cummings
Graves (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Kihuen
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Newhouse
Swalwell (CA)

□ 1710

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes today on account of traveling with the Vice President on official business to Louisiana. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 279, "nay" on rollcall No. 280, "nay" on rollcall No. 281, and "yea" on rollcall No. 282.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the House chamber for votes Wednesday, May 24. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 277, "yea" on rollcall No. 278, and "yea" on rollcall No. 282.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, the man who has served as a father figure to me for the past twenty years has taken a turn for the worse in his battle against cancer and his health is rapidly deteriorating. As such, I will be returning home and will miss votes today, Wednesday, May 24, and for the balance of the week. Had I been present, I would have voted: "yea" on rollcall No. 274, "yea" on rollcall No. 275, "yea" on rollcall No. 276, "yea" on rollcall No. 277, "yea" on rollcall No. 278, "nay" on rollcall No. 279, "nay" on rollcall No. 280, "nay" on rollcall No. 281, and "yea" on rollcall No. 282.

PERMITTING OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO BE TAKEN WHILE THE HOUSE IS IN ACTUAL SESSION ON A DATE DESIGNATED BY THE SPEAKER

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of House Resolution 350, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 350

Resolved, That on such date as the Speaker of the House of Representatives may designate, official photographs of the House may be taken while the House is in actual session. Payment for the costs associated with taking, preparing, and distributing such photographs may be made from the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL IN THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER FOR AN EVENT TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAY OF KING KAMEHAMEHA I

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of Senate Concurrent Resolution 14, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 14

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

SECTION 1. USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL FOR EVENT TO CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY OF KING KAMEHAMEHA I.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center is authorized to be used on June 11, 2017 for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the conduct of the event described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol.

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

OUR VETERANS ARE REAL HEROES

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

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our brave servicemen and -women who have put their lives on the line every day to protect us. Since the founding of our Nation, millions of Americans have proudly served and sacrificed in preservation of our democracy.

Our veterans have paid a tremendous price to defend our freedom, yet leaving the battlefield does not always mean their battles are over. It is, therefore, our duty as a nation to ensure that our servicemembers are properly and respectfully cared for when they return home.

Our veterans are real-life heroes living quietly among us. They are the patriots who were willing to give up everything—everything they had—for their God, their country, and for one another.

The Holy Scripture tells us, in John 15:13: ''Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'' This weekend, let's call to mind all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is because of their valor, strength, and bravery that I stand here before you today. They selflessly put their lives on the line to fight for us, and I am proud to continue fighting for them.

Our men and women of the military represent the very best of America. On behalf of Michigan's Eighth Congressional District, we are eternally grateful for their service.

Happy and safe Memorial Day weekend.

□ 1715

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BUDGET

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, it has been said that a budget is more than a series of statements or line items. It is really a statement of your values and of your priorities.

If that is true, then Donald Trump's anti-working families budget shows he doesn't understand the challenges facing honest, hardworking Americans. Let's be clear: the Trump budget was written by some of the wealthiest Americans for the benefit of the wealthiest Americans.

This budget is a major setback for the middle class, and it makes life even harder for anyone who is trying to punch a ticket to the middle class.

This budget eliminates hundreds of millions of dollars for job creation, it zeros out funding for workforce training and good-paying manufacturing jobs, and it makes it even harder for young people to succeed by cutting teacher training, eliminating after-school programs, and making it harder to pay off student loans.

The American people deserve better. This is not a budget that any Member of Congress should be comfortable supporting.

Democrats are speaking out today against the Trump budget. It is time Republicans do the same.

RECOGNIZING PASTOR TIM BURT'S RETIREMENT

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Pastor Tim Burt on his retirement. Pastor Burt has a long record of service to his community.

He founded American Infant Care Products, which came up with the fold-down infant changing tables found in many restrooms today, helping families of all sorts by providing a convenient way to care for their children.

But he also has now served as associate pastor at Living Word Christian Center in Brooklyn Park since 1989, establishing a small group ministry. In this capacity, Pastor Burt oversaw visitor and public relations, pastoral care, and leadership and volunteer departments. His dedication to our community has certainly inspired many Minnesotans over the years.

Pastor Burt also served as the Minnesota State director for Christians United for Israel, where he developed a statewide network of leaders passionate about Israel, and has led a trip of fellow pastors to that country.

Mr. Speaker, as we recognize Pastor Tim Burt's retirement, we are extremely grateful and proud of the work he has done. I wish he and Renee the very best in their future endeavors.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourn today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maine?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH

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

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I stand to support the lifesaving work of drug courts and veterans treatment courts during this National Drug Court Month, and to honor a constituent of mine with an incredible success story.

These courts are an indispensable resource to law enforcement and other community stakeholders impacted by the opioid epidemic, claiming the lives of 91 Americans each and every day.

Timothy Wynn is a veterans treatment court graduate from my district, whom I had the honor of meeting today. When the decorated marine returned home from Iraq in 2003, he turned to alcohol and other substances to ease his transition back into society. His substance use escalated. He found himself arrested seven times, and spent a year of his life in prison away from his young family. After his final arrest, Tim found the Philadelphia Veterans Treatment Court, where he was given the accountability he needed while also connecting him to the services he had earned.

Today, Tim is reunited with his family and continues his mission as the mentor coordinator for the court where he once stood as a participant.

There are drug court and veterans treatment court graduates just like Tim across the Nation. I call on my colleagues to support these graduates and the good work of drug courts and veterans treatment courts.

ABILITYONE PROGRAM

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the AbilityOne Program and its countless contributions to our communities and to people with disabilities.

Through this important program, community-based nonprofit agencies across the Nation have employed more than 45,000 people who are blind or differently abled. The AbilityOne Program harnesses the purchasing power of the Federal Government to buy products from these agencies, which have made it their mission to employ and train the blind and disabled.

Established in 1983, the program continues to empower those with disabilities by providing gainful employment to a segment of our population who typically experience one of the highest rates of unemployment in the Nation. These critically important employment opportunities have led to increased independence and enhanced quality of life for scores of disabled Americans.

Recently, I had the opportunity to tour an AbilityOne participant in the 22nd District of New York: Human Technologies Corporation located in Utica. This facility employs nearly 600 people on an annual basis.

As a critical part of our community, I am honored to serve this AbilityOne agency and their team of dedicated employees, who continue to make a significant economic impact on our region through the creation of quality products and services to government agencies across all sectors.

REMEMBERING RICHARD COLLINS

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, a young man in my district was killed in what appears to be a vicious crime, probably motivated by hate.

U.S. Army Second Lieutenant Richard W. Collins, III, was just days away from graduating from Bowie State University. Richard stood on the threshold of what promised to be a life of service to his country.

He has been remembered by family and friends as a kind soul, an angel, and a national treasure.

All of us across Maryland were shocked and devastated when we learned of the attack that took his life—an unprovoked attack at a bus station waiting for an Uber to pick him up. An individual came along and asked him to step left—whatever that meant. He said: ''No, I won't.'' And he was stabbed in the chest.

We were deeply alarmed to learn that the suspect in Richard's murder belonged to an alleged online White supremacist group. Richard was African American. Richard's murderer must be held to account under the full weight of our laws, and, hopefully, he will be.

His life is a reminder of everything that makes our Nation extraordinary. His death is a painful reminder that our work in overcoming hatred in this country is far from over.

I have been keeping Richard's parents and family in my thoughts and in my prayers this week, and I will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with a very heavy heart to mourn the loss of a young man in my district who was killed over the weekend in a possible hate-crime. U.S. Army Second Lieutenant Richard W. Collins III was just days away from graduating from Bowie State University College of Business when he was stabbed by an assailant while waiting at a bus stop in College Park on the campus of the University of Maryland. He was there to visit friends and celebrate his having been commissioned as an officer in the Army just two days earlier.

At age twenty-three, Richard stood on the threshold of what promised to be an exciting life of service to his country, and the Army was fortunate to have such a driven and talented young person so eager to be a part of defending our nation. Richard represented the best of the Fifth District, the best of Maryland, and the best of America. All of us across the region were shocked and devastated when we learned of the attack that took his life. We were deeply dismayed as well to learn that the suspect in Richard's murder belonged to an alleged online white supremacist group with references in its name to Nazism and to the so-called 'Alt-Right' movement that espouses xenophobia and racial hatred. The FBI is now investigating, and Richard's murderer must be held to account under the full weight of our laws.

In viewing this tragedy, it is easy to get caught up in the details of who perpetrated the crime and why. But the real story I wish to share with my colleagues is Richard's story. The story of a young man who was so proud to put on his Army uniform and had diligently drilled as a member of the ROTC in college. He has been remembered by family and friends as a 'kind soul,' an 'angel,' and 'a national treasure.' The loss of this outstanding young Marylander and young American diminishes us all.

I have been keeping Richard's parents and extended family in my thoughts and in my prayers these past few days, and I will surely continue to be inspired by his memory for a long time to come. His life is a reminder of everything that makes our nation extraordinary His death is a painful reminder that the work of banishing hatred from our midst is far from over and will require each and every one of us to share in the task. May God bless the memory of Second Lieutenant Richard W Collins III and watch over his family and his community in this hour of their grief.

PROMOTING FREEDOM, ANTICORRUPTION, THE RULE OF LAW, AND AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY SYSTEM IN NICARAGUA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today, the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee passed a bill that I authored, the Nicaraguan Investment and Conditionality Act, the NICA Act.

I thank Chairman DUNCAN and Ranking Member SIRES for working with me to pass this important bipartisan measure that seeks to promote freedom, anticorruption, the rule of law, and supports an independent judiciary system in Nicaragua.

This measure sends a strong message of support to the people of Nicaragua that they are not alone. We in the United States Congress recognize their plight and aspirations for a better future of freedom and opportunity. We share their values of a free and fair electoral system, of justice and liberty

for all Nicaraguans, and we support their pursuit of a more open and democratic society.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BUDGET

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about the President's budget, and, in particular, the $610 billion in proposed cuts to Medicaid over the next 10 years.

In my district on the central coast of California, Medicaid provides healthcare to over 280,000 people. These are people that need it the most, including low-income families, children, disabled, and pregnant women.

Clinics and hospitals, particularly in rural communities like my district, rely on Medicaid to provide patients with mandatory and preventative services. Employees from the number one industry in my area—agriculture—rely on those health clinics so that they can stay healthy and ultimately contribute to our economy and our culture.

If Medicaid is cut, as desired in the President's budget, it will hurt not just my community, it will hurt our country.

Throughout our Nation, millions would lose healthcare, healthcare clinics would close, and many insurance companies who partner with Medicaid would see cuts in their reimbursement rates substantially.

I realize that many of us in Washington have not been on Medicaid, but many of us need to realize that Medicaid benefits many of the Americans that sent us here. The least we can do is support them and their families by fighting against the President's budget and fighting to keep funding for Medicaid.

MARCH DEFICIT AND BALANCING TRADE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, President Trump recently told The Economist that he is ''absolutely a free-trader.'' Ohioans would be the first to tell you that free trade and fair trade do not mean the same thing.

Our trade deficit ballooned to $43.7 billion in March of this year—more red ink and more lost jobs. That skewed gap is even more pronounced with NAFTA nations, where we have a huge negative imbalance, totaling over $16 billion with Mexico and nearly $7 billion with Canada. That yields over 115,000 more forfeited jobs in our country.

Yes, trade deficits translate into lost jobs and lower wages for our workers like steelworkers that have been battered in Lorain, Ohio. We must stop these trade practices that snuff out our jobs and hurt our communities.

That is why tomorrow I will be reintroducing the Balancing Trade Act. This bill requires an actual U.S. policy that takes the trade deficit seriously. It provides real achievable steps to balance our trade deficits with countries with which we hold a deficit of over $10 billion for three consecutive years.

I urge President Trump to support this measure as a reasonable step forward. Let us help heal heartland communities, many of which elected him. Let us seek trade solutions that lift up our people and create new jobs on all sides of North America's borders, but starting here in the good old USA.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 here this evening, and I am delighted to be hosting the Progressive Caucus Special Order hour. We have a number of Members who are going to join us to discuss the President's budget proposal, which appears to have been written at Trump Tower, primarily for the benefit of people spending the weekend at the Mar-a-Lago Club in Florida.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN), to kick off our analysis of the Trump budget.

□ 1730

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity. I would like to thank the gentleman from Maryland.

The Progressive Caucus has its own version of a budget which we have discussed on the floor of Congress previously that we will be glad to put exactly next to the budget that has been produced by this President, because our budget takes a completely different course than the budget that has been put forth by the Trump administration.

We can tell you, now that we have seen the budget from the Republicans, it hits every fear that we thought was going to be in it. There are very few winners, and there are an awful lot of losers in the budget, and that is what we are going to try to show today, just who some of the winners are and who some of the losers are, just to give you a visual display of exactly what is in this Trump budget.

So what people need to know is that this is a budget that is not for the average person across the country. In fact, the average person will be hurt in multiple ways by the cuts that are in this budget. There are very few in this country who are going to applaud this, but it is very few because this is a budget that only benefits a very few. And we, in the Progressive Caucus, are going to do everything we can to fight this, tooth and nail, to make sure this doesn't become law.

Let me just show a few of the winners that we have on this. One of the winners are the wealthiest Americans. This is going to reduce trillions of dollars in taxes that are primarily paid by the wealthy. So clearly, the wealthy are going to do well.

Another group that does well is Wall Street and Big corporations. This budget slashes regulations for Big banks that caused the great recession, and it defunds the agency that is charged with protecting consumers.

Another beneficiary is defense contractors—a $54 billion boost in defense spending at the expense of nearly every other program. That will increase money that will purchase unnecessary new weapons.

The border wall. This is going to put down a $1.6 billion downpayment to build a wall across the Mexican border, something that truly is not necessary and not asked for.

And finally, the last beneficiary is polluters. This is going to roll back environmental regulations that protect our air and water.

So those are the winners on the Trump budget. But if you look on the other side of the equation, there are a whole lot more losers.

Let's start right up here with our friend, Big Bird. PBS funding. The Trump budget would cut funding for children's shows like Sesame Street.

Social Security. The Trump budget will get rid of the insurance to help people with disabilities.

Meals on Wheels. You know, I have had the great fortune of doing Meals on Wheels delivery in Madison, Wisconsin, which is in my district. And not only is it often the only meal, the healthy meal that that person is getting delivered who often can't leave their homes, but it is also that daily check-in to make sure that person is all right.

I just met with someone who works with Meals on Wheels, and they said that there is not a week that goes by that they don't find someone who has fallen in their home and needed that person to come by for help. Well, the Trump budget eliminates funding for programs like Meals on Wheels.

The children's health insurance and Medicaid funding specifically for kids is cut. He cuts dental care for kids, cancer care for kids, access to inhalers, and access to vital medical devices for children.

He cuts nursing home care. Families are going to be forced to pay more out-of-pocket for nursing home care.

The school lunch program. Now, I understand, everyone may not love everything on their tray at lunch, but this is cutting funding for subsidized lunches, causing kids literally to go hungry in this country.

It has education cuts to school and literacy programs, to teacher training and class-size reduction. Over 20 programs are going to be cut. Even Special Olympics gets a cut in this budget.

Today, we had Secretary DeVos at the Appropriations Subcommittee for

the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, and, unfortunately, she couldn't make a case for any of these cuts, which is truly disappointing, because they are going to add hundreds of millions of dollars to give money to people who have children attending private schools, but we are going to be slashing the very programs that make our public schools so strong.

They slash programs for the Department of labor for job training.

There is a $6 billion-plus cut to the National Institutes of Health that works on lifesaving research for diseases like Alzheimer's and ALS and diabetes. And it cuts another billion for cancer research, specifically, in this budget.

Loan repayment programs. This is going to end the loan repayment programs for police officers, nurses, and teachers who work in a public setting.

This has massive cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency that protect our air and water, and it guts general funding that provides that clean air and water programs that are going to affect people across the country.

It cuts funding to prevent major outbreaks for diseases like Ebola and Zika by cutting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention program budget.

Opioid addiction, something that this Congress has, in a bipartisan way, found ways to find additional funding for; in this proposal by the Trump administration, it leaves families that are dealing with addiction on the hook for the cost of treatment in many cases.

Border funding. It is not just that they are building a wall, but this also ramps up funding for deportation task forces which are going to tear families apart in this country; and it adds money to build more detention centers.

This budget will allow the government to sell off swaths of public land that is going to open up our national parks and public land to oil and gas development, including fracking operations.

And this budget, when it comes to women's healthcare, will go after protections in funding for women's healthcare by cutting Planned Parenthood.

Finally, for veterans, it makes it harder for veterans and low-income families of veterans to find housing.

That is just some of the losers, but we want to show the difference in the balance of the very few who benefit and the whole lot of people—and there is a whole lot of other areas that are going to be cut by this budget.

Now, the contrast really is the Progressive Caucus budget that we put forward that we will have a vote on, on this floor of Congress, where we do a completely different approach. Gone are the winners and losers of this case. And the winners would be a big category, being the American people, and the losers really being those, I think, who have abused the system for all too long.

We have a $2 trillion investment in infrastructure that puts money into our roads and bridges, our schools, our waterworks, our broadband, and really makes sure that those are family-supporting jobs that people can get back to work and will create millions of new jobs, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

We make sure that we move forward in affordable healthcare by making it so we can negotiate for prescription drug prices and bring those costs down, as well as allow States to get closer to a single-payer system.

We specifically have comprehensive immigration reform that recognizes those who are aspiring Americans, not by building walls and more detention centers but really providing a path to citizenship so that we can find a way to still protect our borders, but also make sure that we have got a path for people who have lived here for so very long.

We close corporate tax loopholes and make sure that working families are getting the stronger benefit.

We have an investment to make sure that we can have universal child care for all families in this country, not like the proposal that President Trump has put forward that takes care of, quite honestly, President Trump and people like him and the wealthiest in this country, but making sure that every family will never pay more than 10 percent of their income to have child care for their family. And on and on and on is what our contrast is.

So as someone who has been very active in the Progressive Caucus, someone who comes from America's heartland in Wisconsin, we wanted to show the winners and the losers but, more importantly, to show the different path forward the Progressive Caucus is going to put for a vote on the floor of Congress. And I think if you get a chance to compare and contrast these budgets, you can see there is an alternative.

We don't have to slash funding for all sorts of programs just to get $54 billion of new spending for defense. We can actually invest in America, invest in healthcare, invest in our schools, make sure that college is affordable, all the things that we offer in our contrast budget. It is the only budget that is out there right now, so we would love to be able to show that contrast.

But we ask people to take a look at this, and then you decide what is best for your family. I think you are going to decide the Progressive Caucus puts a positive path forward that will make your family prosper and won't just support a very few in this country.

I thank the gentleman from Maryland. I appreciate this opportunity to have this time.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you so much, Congressman POCAN from Wisconsin, a distinguished leader in the House of Representatives, and the new co-chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, a budget, as we like to say, is not just a bunch of numbers, but it is an ethical document. It is a reflection of our values, and it is a plan of action for investment of our energy and our resources into the future.

The Progressive Caucus has drafted The People's Budget based on the actual needs of American society. So we have looked out, and we have seen that the great American infrastructure is ailing; it is crumbling. The bridges are falling down. The roads and the highways need repair. The transit systems are under tremendous stress, including the Metro system here in the Maryland, Washington, Virginia area.

The cybersecurity system is compromised. Our airports, our port structure, our water systems, like in Flint, Michigan, need desperate intervention and rescue and help. We propose a $1 trillion plan of investment in the American infrastructure to create millions of jobs, putting people to work on restoring the strength and the vitality of America's basic institutions, the infrastructure that supports a strong and flourishing economy.

So that is the heart of it. But we are also working to defend the gains we have made in healthcare, to extend healthcare so that all Americans are included in our health insurance system so we can squeeze out the bureaucratic bloat and the money that is wasted on insurance bureaucracy and red tape.

We are also working for investment in quality child care so working families are not spending 30 or 40 or 50 percent of their family budgets on trying to just pay for babysitters and piece together a system.

America is the wealthiest society on Earth, and this is the wealthiest moment in our history. We can provide healthcare for everyone. We can create a childcare system that works for working families in America. We can reinvest in American infrastructure.

But right now, there is no leadership, and there is no vision. We are so disappointed that the White House did not come forward with a plan, a bipartisan plan, to try to reinvest in American infrastructure, which everybody says he or she supports so we could get behind that, but we don't see anything.

Proverbs says that where there is no vision the people will perish, and so we have offered a vision. And instead, they have come with a plan that lacks all vision, lacks any plan for reinvesting in American infrastructure, lacks any investment in the vital services that people need and, on the contrary, works to dismantle healthcare services, Medicaid, education, community development grants, senior workforce, jobs training, you name it, the Peace Corps, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities; slashed $6 billion from NIH in order to undermine scientific research and medical progress on colon cancer and breast cancer and Alzheimer's disease and asthma and bipolar disorder.

We have been making progress on all of these things, and, for some reason,

the Trump administration says they want to pull the plug on it and slash $6 billion from NIH and all of the institutions around the country that NIH supports.

Well, we have invited Congressman RO KHANNA to be with us tonight. He is a leading expert on the economy and on the manufacturing sector, and we have asked him to talk about investment in infrastructure and manufacturing, what we need and what, instead, we have gotten from the Trump budget.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA).

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Congressman RASKIN, and thank you for your leadership with the Progressive Caucus and in articulating a positive vision of what the American people need with a budget.

I want to address the issue of manufacturing because this President went around the country campaigning on bringing manufacturing jobs back. And there is a simple philosophical difference in what the Progressive Caucus believes and the President's budget. If you believe, as the Republicans do, that we need to cut taxes and have less spending, you would be for this President's budget.

But if you believe, as we do, that the big issue facing this country is good-paying jobs and higher wages, you would be for the progressive budget.

□ 1745

Let me give you a concrete example. One of the programs that the President cuts in the name of less government and lower taxes is the Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Now, what does this do? What does the Manufacturing Extension Partnership do? It actually works with small- and medium-sized manufacturers across this country, many in the Rust Belt, to help them be competitive, to help them compete against currency manipulation, against unfair trade deals, to help them compete against lower cost labor.

How does the program do this? It partners them with leading technology companies to say, look, if you are a small- or medium-sized manufacturer, maybe you should have cloud technology. Move your technology off the factory floor and use the cloud to be more cost-competitive so that you can compete. Basically, the program helps to bring and keep manufacturing jobs in the United States.

Now, here is the irony. You would think, oh, is this a liberal idea? Is this the idea of Democrat, or a liberal Democrat? The irony is this was Ronald Reagan's idea. It was actually a program instituted by President Reagan in 1988 to help American manufacturers compete for the 21st century, and every administration has supported it.

One would think this President who ran on bringing manufacturing jobs would say, okay, let's quadruple funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Instead, he zeroed it out, zeroed out the funding for manufacturing programs. The progressive budget says we want to increase our investment in manufacturing. We want to actually help the small- and medium-sized manufacturers create jobs in the United States.

I have one more concrete example before I hand it back over to my colleague, Mr. RASKIN.

The Appalachian Regional Commission invests in helping to create jobs across the parts of this country that most need that investment. I was down in Appalachia visiting HAL ROGERS' district, a distinguished Republican who chaired the Appropriations Committee, and we saw the Appalachian Regional Commission's investment in helping coal miners' kids get jobs.

This Republican budget, this administration zeros out the funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission. Instead, we ought to be increasing funding in programs that are going to help transition folks from the industrial to the digital economy.

I think my colleague, Congressman RASKIN, will explain that the Progressive budget is not just a moral document. It very much is, and it keeps our commitment to seniors and to those in need, but it is also a blueprint for job creation and good wages and for creating jobs in precisely the places that need them most.

This is the big division in this Congress. Do you believe that the big issue is that we need more tax cuts for the investor class, that we need simply to cut government, or do you believe we need government to partner with local leaders, with businesses, to create jobs and better wages?

If you believe the latter, I urge you to take a look at the Progressive budget and see our vision for job creation and higher wages.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman KHANNA for that excellent discussion.

You would think, with all of the domestic budget of the country being dismantled and slashed and reduced by the Trump administration that we would end up saving money, but they don't in any way at all because the money is just being shifted over to the Pentagon.

So the proposal is to slash $56 billion from things like Meals on Wheels, NIH research into eating disorders and asthma and Alzheimer's disease and heart and lung disorders and breast cancer and colon cancer, and environmental cleanup like the Chesapeake Bay cleanup, which they want to zero out, and then to shift the money over to the Pentagon at a time when the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform received a report and had a hearing on a McKinsey report which showed that there was $125 billion in immediate savings available at the Pentagon in waste, fraud, abuse, and contractor overruns.

So, at a moment when the Pentagon is drowning in money that they don't know what to do with and all of the beltway bandits are buzzing around in order to get their slice of the pie, President Trump decides it is a good moment to try to dismantle services for the elderly and to stop job training for young people, to stop job training in location for retired citizens, wipe out funding for the Chesapeake Bay cleanup, and roll back or abolish preschool development grants to the States.

The litany of attacks on the American people is really quite astounding, and I invite everybody just to go and read the specifics of this budget, which can be read as nothing more than an assault on the health and the well-being and the security of the American people.

For example, the Department of Education budget proposes to cut $578 billion in title I, part A to support services for disadvantaged students. It reduces IDEA funding by $113 million, seriously jeopardizing special education services for students with disabilities all across the country.

It eliminates title II, part A, which provides Federal funding for teacher support and class size reduction. It eliminates or reduces more than 20 additional programs promoting literacy in our communities. It cuts Perkins Career and Technical Education funding by 15 percent. That is just on the education side.

Department of Health and Human Services, it eliminates the Community Services Block Grant. It eliminates the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. It cuts the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health by 40 percent. It reduces funding for Child Care and Development Block Grant programs by tens of millions of dollars. It reduces support for Federal job training for adults by 40 percent, job training for dislocated workers and youth.

It ends the Senior Community Service Employment Program, an excellent program that has located work, meaningful work, for tens of thousands of older Americans. It closes Job Corps centers. It eliminates funding to counter the worst forms of child labor through the Bureau of International Labor Affairs. It eliminates $11 million in OSHA safety training grants for high hazard industries.

You have got to read it to believe it, but the amazing thing is, despite pulling the plug on all of these essential domestic programs that have been proven to work, it doesn't save us any money because the money is just thrown at the Pentagon and is being saved to throw up the wealth ladder in the country, send it up the wealth ladder through tax cuts to the largest corporations and the wealthiest Americans.

That is the name of the game. Everybody understands it, which is why this is the good news. At least we are hearing from both sides of the aisle that the President's budget written in gold

at Trump tower for the people at Mar-a-Lago is DOA, dead on arrival. Everybody is saying it, that there is no way that America could absorb the shock of letting this budget come anywhere near to reality.

But the message that we get from President Trump and his administration is very simple: Let them eat emoluments. Let them eat emoluments. Now, of course, we don't get them; he gets them. But the American people are left empty-handed at the end of this.

We don't get any meaningful investment in the infrastructure of the country. There is no jobs program that is in here. There is no attempt to guarantee the solvency and the strength and the resilience of the Social Security program. We have got that as part of our plan in The People's Budget for the Progressive Caucus.

It is far from trying to stabilize and strengthen Medicare and Medicaid, those two great victories of the Great Society. There is an attempt to undermine and ravage Medicaid and Medicare, again, to send all of the wealth up the income ladder, all of the wealth to the people who need it the least in the country, pulling the plug on everybody else.

Well, our hope is that we are going to be able to organize people to stop it, but the tragedy here is that there are so many needs in America that need to be addressed. Working people have seen a major erosion in their living standards over the last several decades. Working people have lost pension security.

Working people need to have retirement sources stabilized. We have got to use Social Security as a way to make sure that everybody can experience a decent and dignified retirement. Social Security is a great accomplishment, maybe the greatest antipoverty program ever created in the history of the Earth. It lifted millions of senior Americans out of poverty; and despite the opposition of the GOP at the time, now everybody concedes that Social Security was a brilliant idea with administrative bureaucratic overhead less than 1 percent, and it lifts millions of seniors to a state of at least a modicum of dignity in retirement. And there are millions of children who are on Social Security because of survivors benefits and disability benefits.

So we need to strengthen the Social Security system. We need to reinvest in it, and we need to expand it, because it used to be that there were supposed to be three pillars for people's old age: one was Social Security, another was a defined pension, and another was personal savings.

But the pensions from private employment are increasingly gone. They have been scattered to the winds. And people's personal savings have been eroded by the dramatic increase of economic inequality in the country and the erosion of the living standards of working people.

Tens of millions of Americans are relying exclusively on Social Security now, so we have got to reinvest in Social Security and make sure it works, and we have got plans for doing that, too.

But the point is that the real problems of the country have been ignored. There is no vision. There is no program. There is no policy for reinvesting in America coming from the Mar-a-Lago set, from this Cabinet of billionaires.

We are not getting any of it. Instead, we get an almost laughable, comical, cartoon version of rightwing GOP economics, which proposes to slash everything and to uproot the basic programs that the American people rely on for a civilized society. We can do better than this.

I see I have been joined by my very distinguished colleague who will pursue the discussion. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thank you to Congressman RASKIN for holding down this Special Order. You do such an excellent job, you and PRAMILA JAYAPAL, and we are grateful for it.

Mr. Speaker, here are just a few headlines from the budget that the Trump administration just released:

''Trump Budget Leaves Working Class Base Behind''; that is the Detroit Free Press.

''Meatloaf Again: Christie Meekly Accepts Trump's Medicaid Cuts''; that is the New Jersey Star-Ledger.

''Trump Budget Replicates Disastrous Kansas Approach. This Won't End Well''; that is the Kansas City Star, Mr. Speaker.

''No Help from Trump''; that is the Houston Chronicle.

''Trump Meets the Pope While His Budget Threatens the Least of Us''; that is The Sacramento Bee.

''The Harsh Budget Americans Voted for''; that is the Charlotte Observer.

''Another Bad Budget from Trump Targets the Poor,'' The Washington Post.

''Trump's Assault on Working Voters''; that is the Baltimore Sun.

''Surprise, Surprise: Trump's Budget Punishes the Sick and the Poor While Rewarding the Wealthy''; that is the LA Times.

''A Slash-and-Burn Budget,'' New York Daily News.

''Budget Cuts Include U.S. Heart''; that is northjersey.com;

The New York Times: ''A Budget That Promises Little But Pain.''

Bloomberg View: ''Trump's Budget is a Waste of Everybody's Time.''

Financial Times, no beacon of liberalism there, Mr. Speaker: ''Trump's Implausible Plan for the U.S. Budget.''

So whether you are talking about conservative instruments in the news or more liberal ones or more middle-of-the-road, it is really kind of amazing: Everyone seems to share one feeling about the Trump budget. We all hate it. It is bad. It is not a good thing, and there are plenty of reasons why people don't like it.

And so I just want to add that the OMB is led by one of our former colleagues, Mick Mulvaney, and I think Mick is a nice guy. I can't tell people that I personally dislike Mick. He is nice to me. But that is not what this is about.

□ 1800

This is about how we are operating in our public lives. In our public lives and discharging our public responsibility, I have to quote the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. He says: Meals on Wheels sounds great. We're not going to spend money on programs that cannot show that they actually deliver on promises that we've made to people.

I will submit to you that Meals on Wheels is a very meritorious program, it costs very little money, and it allows vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities to live at home. Deep cuts.

Actually, Mick said as well: Deep budget cuts are actually one of the most compassionate things we can do.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, compassionate for who?

Maybe those billionaires at Mar-a-Lago—maybe they need a little love, too, sometimes—or the people who occupy Trump Towers.

Regarding HUD, or Housing and Urban Development, he said: It doesn't work very well. Tell that to the people who rely on low-income housing tax credits, section 8 voucher programs, and all types of housing programs that allow people to afford their housing.

On the issue of school nutrition programs, he says: Guess what. There's no demonstrable evidence that they're actually doing that. There's no demonstrable evidence that we're actually helping kids to do better in school. This is about school nutrition.

Here is another one: We can't ask single mothers to continue to pay for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Well, single moms might rely on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to help their kids learn how to read. I think that Sesame Street is a pretty good outfit. That might be their only avenue.

Here is another one: If you ask, 999 people out of 1,000 would tell you that Social Security disability is not part of Social Security. It is an old-age retirement that they think of when they think of Social Security.

Quite the contrary. People do think of Social Security disability when they think of Social Security.

Here is another quote: ''Are there folks on SNAP who shouldn't be?''

That is the question.

So we are, again, trying to focus on fraud in SNAP, rather than worrying about hungry Americans.

Here is another quote: ''Maybe it's reasonable to ask if there are folks who are on there that shouldn't be. That is a reasonable question to ask.''

You know what? I think it is focusing on the wrong part of the problem. Hunger, Mr. Speaker, is the problem in the richest country in the history of the world. At its richest point in its own history, we are being told by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget that we cannot afford SNAP, Meals on Wheels, and public broadcasting. Amazing.

I think that, honestly, Mr. Speaker, it is often said that you should speak truth to power. I think we must speak truth to power. I think the gentleman from Maryland would agree with me that we have got to speak truth to power. But it occurs to me, Mr. Speaker, that the power knows exactly what the truth is: this budget is going to hurt hungry children. The budget is going to cut seniors. It is going to cut veterans. It is going to cut public broadcasting, which is one of the major ways people get news in South Dakota and rural America. It is going to cut the Appalachian Regional Commission. It is going to leave devastation almost everywhere. It is going to cut the EPA by a third.

The power knows—and I am talking about Trump and his administration—the devastation that they are going to inflict on people. In fact, that is why they are doing it. They just don't believe the government has any role in helping to make Americans lives better.

Their idea of freedom, Mr. Speaker, is a billionaire being able to pollute anywhere and everywhere he wants. Their idea of freedom is amassing great fortunes at the expense of everyone else, all the while relying on our Nation's military, our Nation's police, the road system; all the while relying on clean water, clean air; all the while relying on public schools to educate their workforce.

They say: I did it all by myself. Yet everything they have done has been with the help of the government of the people of the United States of America. It is really outrageous, Mr. Speaker.

I think that we are in a moment when we have got to speak truth to each other, Mr. Speaker. We have got to go all across this Nation and talk to people in the barbershops, the VFW halls. We have got to talk to people in the church basement, the mosque basement, the synagogue basement. We have got to talk to people on the corners and tell them about this budget. If they hear about this Trump budget, they will be outraged.

Nobody can support this budget, not even a millionaire or a billionaire, unless you believe that you are not your brother's keeper, that you have no obligation to other people around you, that everything around you should be amassed to accumulate wealth for yourself. That is the only possible way anybody can stand next to this budget.

I really do hope that the Republican caucus puts this budget up for a vote. I want to see who is going to stand next to this monstrosity of a budget. I am curious to see who, representing southern Ohio, Kentucky, or Tennessee, is going to vote to zero out the Appalachian Regional Commission; who, representing a northern-tier State, is going to cut, zero out, LIHEAP. I want to see the Republican who is going to do that. I think that will be a pretty gutsy move. I guarantee you, your constituents will know exactly what you did. They are watching, Mr. Speaker. People watch C–SPAN and they read the news. They read the headlines that I read off, Mr. Speaker, and they are aware of what is happening in the people's House at this very hour.

I want the people to know that it is the government's responsibility to take care of the least of these. If you are too poor, too old, or too sick to work, we should help people. We should do it. I believe it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I don't care if they call me a bleeding heart liberal—they can call me anything they want—but I am going to be there for low-income people who are too old, too sick, or too young to work. I am going to be there to make sure that people who are out of work but who are able-bodied have the support that they need to get to work, to have clean air, to have clean water, to promote jobs and infrastructure.

We are going to be there to do those things, Mr. Speaker, because we believe in them.

Do you know what else, Mr. Speaker?

We don't believe ''tax'' is a four-letter word. It is actually a three-letter word. It is not a bad word at all. In fact, it is the dues that you pay to live in a civilized society. If you think tax is some kind of a curse word, you can move to Somalia, because they don't have many there.

Here, we have the protection of our police. We have the protection of our courts. We have the protection of our Nation's military. We have the protection of people who inspect the meat, the water, the air, and everything else, and these people look after us as they discharge their public responsibility and they get paid in our tax money. There is nothing wrong with it. We stand on that.

I believe there has got to be a few Republicans who agree with what I just said. I believe there has got to be a few Republicans who believe that it is a good idea for the public to spend money on figuring out the vexing diseases that are ravaging people all over America, like ALS, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's. We should research these diseases. And if we need public money to do it, Mr. Speaker, we should spend that money. But I don't think this Trump budget reflects that.

I want to see my friends on the Republican side of the aisle join us and say we should not cut the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; we should not cut critical programs that help people; we should not cut supplemental assistance programs, SNAP, and food stamps for hungry Americans; we should not cut Medicaid, leaving families on the hook to pay more for the care of their loved ones with disabilities.

I don't believe they believe these cuts are right. I just think that it is going to take a lot of political courage to stand up and say: You know what? Sometimes the government does good for people—we have spent decades saying the government is the problem—and now people actually believe it sometimes, except they don't believe it when you are cutting their healthcare, basic research, cutting money for our parks, and literally cutting everything, except the military.

Oh, by the way, I am the proud father of a military son. My son is a veteran. He just finished 4 years of service in the United States Army, Mr. Speaker. He was a combat veteran. My whole family is proud of him. But I am going to tell you one thing: the money didn't go to him. He made less than $25,000 a year. He didn't mind. He is serving his country.

Where is all this Big Money going to go? Who is getting it?

I don't know. People who make the machinery, the weapons industry, they are going to make out like bandits, you better believe that.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, even the money that they are asking us to spend is going to hurt veterans. I know they are trying to plus-up a little on the VA, but there are a whole lot of other services that veterans benefit from, and they are going to get hurt.

Mr. Speaker, this Trump budget is wrong, and I believe that every Democrat knows it is wrong, and I even believe a few Republicans know that it is wrong. We should stand up and say that it is wrong.

It is wrong to slash the earned income tax credit and child tax credit by $40 billion. This is money that goes to people who actually work for a living.

I heard one of our Nation's leaders in the administration say: Oh, you are crying about these people who are going to get cut. What about the people who pay all the taxes?

Mr. Speaker, if we would raise the minimum wage, you would have more people paying taxes, because people's pay would be higher. It is no comfort to say that half the people don't pay taxes. They do pay taxes. They pay payroll taxes, they pay sales taxes, they pay property taxes, they pay all kind of taxes, Mr. Speaker. It is wrong to try to imply that they are freeloaders because they don't pay income taxes. They would be glad to pay those income taxes if their income were higher, which it would be if we invested in America, which this budget does the opposite of. It divests America.

I just want to say to you as we begin to wrap up that our Nation is the greatest Nation in the world not because of bombs and guns and military. It is the greatest Nation because we believe in liberty and justice for all, and not just a millionaire's and a billionaire's liberty to pollute all they want,

escape taxes all they want, do whatever they please, without any ramifications.

Mr. Speaker, justice is also a part of that equation. Justice means doing right by people. Justice means being fair to people. This budget is the exact opposite of it. This budget leaves out people like our veterans. It cuts almost a billion dollars from housing assistance programs to keep a roof over people's heads. It cuts Social Security by $72 billion by restricting enrollment in disability insurance programs.

It hurts our national security. It spends over $2 billion to build an unnecessary border wall. Oh, this wall. Mr. Speaker, in his campaign, the wall was among the most offensive things, because what it really said is we don't really want folks from south of the border around here. That is what it said. That is how they felt. Yet here we are spending money to prove that point.

It cuts the State Department and USAID by almost 32 percent. Generals will tell you that it is better to talk it out than to shoot it out. Yet here we are cutting down our ability to talk it out. What an outrage.

It eliminates international family planning.

Let me wrap up by saying this. I was talking to some of my Republican friends—and I do have many, and I am proud to say so—and one of them said to me: KEITH, this thing probably is never going to see the light of day.

I said: Maybe it will and maybe it won't. But this Trump budget is a direct reflection of what he would do if he could do it. And that is scary.

Mr. RASKIN. I thank Congressman ELLISON for his eloquent remarks and extraordinary service as co-chair of the Progressive Caucus. He has been replaced this week by Congressman POCAN, who we heard from earlier this evening, but it was in deference only to the busyness of his schedule, since he has also become, in addition to the distinguished Congressman from Minnesota, the vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Let's begin to wrap this up. Let's review some of the extraordinary assaults on the health and the well-being of the American people that are embodied in this atrocious budget.

First, the President says: let's cut children's health insurance by more than $600 billion.

This would strip countless children of dental care, asthma treatment, and other medical visits.

It eliminates over $190 billion to the SNAP program, a supplemental assistance program that is the food assistance program which helps prevent 42 million working families from going hungry in America.

It calls for billions in cuts to Medicaid. It, unbelievably, in the middle of an opioid crisis across the country, would reduce access to drug addiction treatment and drug prevention services with a $1.2 billion cut to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

□ 1815

At a time when we need to be doubling down on investment in drug prevention and drug treatment and dealing with the opioid crisis, the Trump administration simply hides under the bed.

The budget would cut the Department of Labor's job training programs by an astonishing two-thirds—that is job training for our people at a time when we are going through dramatic structural shifts in the nature of the economy with robots and mechanization, and they want to cut by 65 percent the Department of Labor's job training programs.

They want to sell off our national parks and public lands for oil drilling, gas exploration, and fracking. They want to sell the land of the American people—the trust that we have had for centuries—that a great Republican President, Teddy Roosevelt, once insisted on. They want to sell it off to their friends at Exxon Mobil and the frackers across the country.

They have spent $10 billion building their stupid wall—a 14th century answer to a 21st century problem. Maybe they will have a moat and some alligators to go with it. But didn't I hear somebody say on the campaign trail that Mexico was going to pay for that wall? I heard millions of people chanting that at rallies, and the President was saying: Mexico—you can believe me—Mexico is going to pay for it.

Already they are putting $2 billion in our budget while they are stripping schoolchildren of their lunches. While they are slashing scientific and medical research in the country, they want to put $2 billion into a wall that nobody needs at a time when illegal immigration from the southern border is at a decade's record low. They want to take $2 billion and put it into that.

They want to cut billions of dollars from afterschool programs, from teacher training, and from student loans. They want to eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, which millions of women and men depend on not just for family planning but also for basic medical attention, purely out of animosity toward Planned Parenthood which has not received one penny for abortion services in many decades. They just want to dismantle it. They would destroy it if they could, despite the fact that millions of Americans depend on Planned Parenthood.

They want to cut Social Security—which they promised not to touch—by $72 billion by restricting enrollment in the disability insurance program—and on and on. You name your favorite, most important Federal program, and I guarantee you, unless you are a Big Business beltway contractor defense bandit, it is going to be cut in this budget. You can go and check it out.

Now, if a foreign power—a foreign repressive power—like Putin's Russia or Duterte's Philippines or Orban's Hungary set out to injure and demoralize the American people, they could not have done better than the budget which President Trump sent to Capitol Hill this week. This is a budget that is drafted seemingly by an enemy of the American people.

It is not the media that is the American people's enemy, as the President insisted, it is whoever drafted this budget. That is the enemy of the American people.

Let them eat emoluments, they are telling us with this. Let them eat emoluments. They have got all the emoluments. They are the ones taking the money from the foreign governments. But they are saying, Let them eat emoluments, because the American people have been robbed by this budget if it were ever to see the light of day.

Mr. Speaker, a great Republican President once spoke of government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Abraham Lincoln was a Member of this body. He sat where we have the honor of sitting in this body, and he talked about government of the people, by the people, and for the people. This is a budget of the super rich, by the super rich, for the super rich. It was drafted by a Cabinet of billionaires for the people who are lounging at Mar-a-Lago today, and they give the finger to the rest of the country. That is what this budget says.

If my friends on the other side of the aisle are smart—and I know they are—and they know what is good for them—and I know they do, Mr. Speaker—they will say immediately this document is DOA and they have got nothing to do with it and very quickly distance themselves from it. We need to return to that great vision of a government that is of the people, by the people, and for the people. That is who we are as a country.

The government right now is experiencing a hostile takeover by a tiny elite, and that is what is taking place around the world today. If you look at Putin's Russia, if you look at Orban's Hungary, if you look at Duterte in the Philippines, if you look at what they tried to do with Le Pen in France, there is a new model, my friends, all over the world. Government is a moneymaking operation for a tiny elite in each society. They want to go back to something like kings and queens where the government serves the tiniest portion of the people.

They might get elected spouting populist rhetoric and slogans, but the minute they get in, Wall Street takes over. We have got a President who campaigned against Goldman Sachs, and his Cabinet is dominated by Goldman Sachs. How long are people going to fall for that magic trick? Not very long if anybody still believes in it out there. I don't think anybody's faith or confidence in this President as a populist will survive this budget—what a joke, and what an insult to the great populists of American history like the populist movement in William Jennings Bryan, that they would dare to associate themselves with populism.

This is a budget that is based on elitism and class warfare, top-down class warfare: the richest people in this country against everybody else. That is what this budget represents. That is what it embodies.

So check out the Progressive Caucus' People's Budget. It is a real reinvestment in the infrastructure of the country: our bridges, our roads, our highways, our transit systems, our port systems, our airports, and cybersecurity—where America really needs investment, not stealing from poor people, not stealing from the working class, and not ripping off NIH and the Centers for Disease Control in order to put money in the Pentagon for a bunch of beltway bandits and defense contractors who have so much money they don't know what to do with it anymore. That is not what we need. We need a real investment in America.

This budget is an affront, and it is an insult to the American people. We should reject it immediately. I call on all of our colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to repudiate this document in a bipartisan fashion, and let's get down to work for the American people.

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

MEMORIAL DAY

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, on Monday we observe Memorial Day to honor members of America's Armed Forces who have died in service to our Nation. For those who have lost a loved one, a friend, a neighbor, or a comrade, this day has added significance, remembrance, and sadness.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, many of us in this House will attend Memorial Day ceremonies over the weekend as we honor those who have died in the service to this great Nation.

Certainly, in this office, one of the more difficult but one of the most honored opportunities is to be at the grave site of our fallen heroes as they are laid to rest and that American flag, which flies over our Capitol, is draped over their coffin.

On this Memorial Day, I really want to highlight my brother-in-law, Larry Emerman, who in the fall of 1980, in the service of this country as a pilot in the United States Navy as a lieutenant commander, lost his life in the service of our Nation.

Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May. Memorial Day is one of America's most solemn occasions. The tradition of Memorial Day dates back to 1864 in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, which is considered to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. Three ladies decorated the graves of fallen Civil War soldiers, and the custom has continued every year since then.

It was an early fall day, in 1864, when Emma Hunter and her friend, Sophie Keller, picked flowers and went to the old cemetery to lay them on the grave of Emma's father, Reuben Hunter. Dr. Hunter was a young Boalsburg doctor at the time of the Civil War. When he volunteered to serve with the Army of the North, he was assigned to the hospital in Baltimore. In addition to attending the wounded soldiers, he also cared for the men who had contracted yellow fever while fighting in the southern swamplands. Dr. Hunter became ill. He died of yellow fever, and his body was buried in the Boalsburg Cemetery.

On their way that day in that early fall, the two girls met Mrs. Elizabeth Myers, whose young son, Amos, had been killed the last day of the Battle of Gettysburg and was also buried in the old cemetery. Learning where the girls were going, Mrs. Myers asked to join them. They shared the flowers, and they placed them on both graves. It was decided then and there that they would meet the following year with flowers for all who had died in the Civil War. The three young women told their friends of the plans, and when the day came around, most of the villagers joined them.

From that simple beginning came the observance of Memorial Day in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. Every year since then, the people have met on the Diamond in Boalsburg Square for the walk to the old cemetery to lay flowers on the graves of all the soldiers dead.

They are led by a hometown band. All ages join in the walk and participate in the simple service of remembering. I have been proud to participate in that tradition which has spanned more than 150 years.

Boalsburg still puts on a traditional Memorial Day celebration complete with a parade, a community walk to the cemetery, speeches, military reenactments, and much more.

On Memorial Day, communities across the country will pay tribute to our fallen veterans who never returned home. Many of us will gather with family members, friends, and neighbors as we keep those we lost in our hearts.

Unfortunately, for many of our Nation, Memorial Day has become a day of picnics and family gatherings, which is not a bad thing, but we must always remember truly where Memorial Day came from and its purpose, that we not forget those sacrifices.

So as we raise the Stars and Stripes and as we lay wreaths at the monuments, memorials, and cemeteries, let us remember that our freedom is thanks to those who have died in sacrifice. We celebrate Memorial Day in honor of so many who are no longer with us. May God bless them, and certainly God bless the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for his leadership and putting this opportunity today for us to gather on the floor to speak on the topic of not just Memorial Day but the service and the sacrifice that warranted its origination.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Memorial Day on May 29, 2017. On this day, Americans across our Nation pay respects to and honor members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have sacrificed their lives defending the freedoms that we so gratefully enjoy.

The decision to leave families and friends, travel to a land that is utterly unfamiliar, and risk their lives protecting the lives of others is among the most selfless acts one can make.

Roughly 1.5 million Americans are currently serving in one of the five branches of the Armed Forces. Of these Americans, nearly 90,000 are assigned to one of Georgia's numerous military bases which are scattered throughout our great State.

Georgia's First Congressional District that I have the honor and privilege of representing is particularly important to our Nation's Armed Forces as it includes Fort Stewart Army Base, Hunter Army Airfield, Kings Bay Naval Base, and Moody Air Force Base.

The service provided by our Nation's armed services is invaluable. Throughout our history, millions have paid the ultimate price for freedom—they have given their lives in order to save ours. I ask that you please keep these brave men and women in your prayers, not only on Memorial Day but every day.

It is an honor to represent a State and a district with such a strong tie to our Nation's defense. I ask that you pray for our troops, and I ask that you pray for our Nation. God bless each and every one of you as we observe this great Memorial Day. God bless America.

□ 1830

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to my colleague from North Carolina (Mr. HUDSON).

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this week is All American Week, the annual celebration of the 82nd Airborne Division's mission and the paratroopers who serve to uphold it.

Based in my district at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the 82nd Airborne Division is the Nation's Global Response

Force and can mobilize, load, and strike in a moment's notice. These rapid reaction forces put the ''air'' in airborne and are absolutely vital to our national security.

This year marks the division's 100th anniversary, and it is a special time for us to celebrate its incredible history as America's Guard of Honor.

Since its inception, the 82nd Airborne Division has played a role in every major U.S. conflict around the world. It was nicknamed the ''All American Division'' because of the unique and diverse group of soldiers who came together to form the division from all across the United States.

As the Representative of Fort Bragg in Congress, I am so proud of the 82nd Airborne's legacy, of our paratroopers and their families. They put country before self, and we are so grateful.

I will continue to work to ensure this critical installation remains the epicenter of the universe and the tip of the spear guaranteeing our national security.

As we celebrate All American Week this week, I ask my fellow Americans to join me in praying for servicemembers stationed at Fort Bragg who are currently deployed and for their families here at home.

We also remember our veterans who served in the 82nd Airborne Division, particularly those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Today's paratroopers stand on the shoulders of these giants.

Airborne, all the way.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, each Memorial Day, a newspaper in my State, the Arizona Republic, publishes one particular letter to remind its readers of the sacrifice our soldiers made in defense of their country. The letter is written by Sullivan Ballou to his wife on July 14, 1861.

Sullivan was a major in the Union Army, 32 years old, and about to enter the first battle of Bull Run. A little more than a week later, almost 3,000 Union soldiers had perished, including Sullivan.

Major Sullivan's letter reads as follows: ''My very dear Sarah: The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days—perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more. . . .

''I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans on the triumph of the government and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution. And I am willing—perfectly willing—to lay down all my joys in this life to help maintain this government and to pay that debt. . . .

''Sarah, my love for you is deathless. It seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but omnipotence could break; and yet my love of country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me unresistibly on with all these chains to the battlefield. The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them for so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grow up to honorable manhood around us.

''I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me—perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar—that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name.

''Forgive my many faults and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have oftentimes been. How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness. . . .

''But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this Earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights . . . always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your check, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by.

''Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.''

So closes Major Ballou's letter.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BRAT).

Mr. BRAT. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank my very good friend from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS), first of all, for his moving testimony on behalf of the greatest folks who ever served our Nation and for arranging this Special Order to honor the valiant men and women that serve our country every day.

While most of America views Memorial Day, rightly, as the official start of summer vacations and cookouts, which we all enjoy, I hope we also do not forget to pause and remember the men and women who give the full, last measure of devotion serving our country. It is a day to remember those who died defending the freedoms we hold dear and acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to our servicemembers and their loved ones. This weekend, we stop to mourn so many of our heroes who served: brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, aunts and uncles who never came home.

National cemeteries often serve as the final resting place for those who served our country. Founded by President Lincoln and enacted by Congress in 1862, today you can find these cemeteries tucked away in communities across America. Too often the history and stories they hold remain untold or forgotten.

In 1867, Culpeper National Cemetery was established and is located in my congressional district. Earlier this month, a 23-year-old young man was laid to rest there.

U.S. Army Sergeant Cameron Thomas grew up in Ohio, but his family later made Culpeper, Virginia, home. I was proud to see so many members of the Culpeper community lining the streets holding American flags to honor Sergeant Thomas.

At the age of 19, Sergeant Thomas became one of the youngest soldiers to ever earn the Ranger designation. On his fifth deployment, he was killed in action on April 27 in Afghanistan during a night raid on a remote ISIS stronghold that resulted in killing the head of ISIS in Afghanistan.

Family members and friends described him as a man who lived with intention and determination. He believed anything worth doing was worth overdoing and that moderation is for cowards. He was a man who knew his mission and served our country with distinction.

Sergeant Cameron Thomas represented the best of our armed services. He loved his family, passionately served his country, and will be a soldier we honor and cherish for the rest of our Nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) for doing this service for our country.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I am going to take a moment to give recognition to a special veteran from my district who is 90 years old and is a World War II veteran, who worked in the U.S. Navy during World War II and saw many trips across the Pacific Ocean and endured the life of a sailor, sometimes monotonous and sometimes under very perilous circumstances, including at least one attack by kamikazes of his ship and convoy.

I pay special tribute at this time to Wayne Whitlock, who has persevered for many years after service to his country in that great war.

Mr. Speaker, I am also reminded tonight of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. As President Lincoln looked out on a battlefield that had experienced almost 50,000 casualties, he said: ''The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth.''

Mr. Speaker, very few of us in this Chamber will be remembered long after we leave Washington, D.C. Almost no one will remember my speech tonight, and it will soon become lost in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Yet we are here in this body because of the heroic efforts of men and women who have given their lives for this country for over 200 years. We can never forget their sacrifices.

The only reason we can participate in the activities of this Chamber is because of the sacrifices of our Armed Forces, particularly those who have paid the ultimate price. They have nobly defended our freedoms and our way of life up to their last measure of devotion. They left behind fathers, mothers, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends, and communities to ensure that future generations walk in the light of liberty.

President Lincoln was resolved that those soldiers shall not have died in vain. They and all the soldiers who have died defending American wars and conflicts still deserve that respect and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, we should govern every day with our heroes in mind. We should strive to make them proud of our speech, our actions, and our commitment to our promises. The American Dream, spirit, and Constitution that they fought for should be our charge.

I would be remiss tonight if I did not mention the loved ones these patriots left behind, who are also patriotic. Countless men, women, and children have watched their American soldiers walk away from home, hoping that they will return safely, unaffected physically, mentally, and emotionally. Sadly, many of those heroes never make it home. Knowing that no words can do justice to their sacrifices, I can only say: Thank you. A grateful nation mourns with your loss.

Mr. Speaker, Monday may be the official observance of Memorial Day, but we live with the memory of our fallen heroes every day across our country. I am eternally grateful for their sacrifices.

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

□ 1845

THE SCOURGE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this coming Monday, May 29, marks the 2-year anniversary of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, called the JVTA.

Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives and the Senate worked together in a bipartisan manner to write this comprehensive, massive law to fight human trafficking. Basically, we said in this legislation that modern-day slavery will not be tolerated in the United States, and that message was made loud and clear when the law was signed 2 years ago.

Since that time, there have been wonderful successes by providing victims with help and services that they need to recover, and by capturing and charging both the traffickers and the buyers according to our law.

DEBBIE'S STORY

Mr. Speaker, Debbie grew up in an idyllic American neighborhood.

The middle child of a close-knit military family living in the suburbs, Debbie could have never imagined that she would be forced into sex slavery.

One cool Phoenix night, Debbie's mother thought nothing of letting her young daughter meet a friend in their front yard one night to play.

Busy with dishes and other children inside, her mother didn't realize that her young daughter, clad in her cartoon pajamas, was being abducted by two men in front of their house.

These deviants threw Debbie in the car, drugged and gang raped her.

They held a loaded gun to her forehead and threatened to pull the trigger if she ever tried to escape.

For 60 days she was forced to have sex with countless men.

Thankfully for Debbie, a lucky anonymous tip led police to a hotel room where they found Debbie tied up and stashed under a bed.

CHERYL BRIGGS' STORY

Cheryl Briggs grew up in an abusive home, sexually and physically abused by her father.

Her mother left when Cheryl was very young to escape the abuse.

At the age of 12, Cheryl didn't know what else to do to get away from the father she feared, so she ran away.

She began hitchhiking with truck drivers and anyone who would take her.

This led her to a ride with a motorcyclist and into human trafficking hell.

He took her to a biker club filled with men who took advantage of her.

He became her trafficker.

She was forced to dance at a strip club by day and sold on the streets at night.

She was trapped in the world of human trafficking.

Cheryl didn't know how to get help.

She had no one to call and no one to provide for her.

No one came to rescue her.

That is until a patron at a strip club found out that she was only 15 and helped her escape.

LENA'S STORY

In her formative years, Lena wore turtlenecks and baggy clothes to school every day.

Why did she do so?

To hide the bruises that covered her entire body.

When her abusive foster mother lost custody, Lena ran away.

She was just 13 years old.

After bolting from the front lawn at the Houston middle school, she ran into a friendly-looking stranger.

This man offered to look after her, protect and love her.

Human traffickers manipulate the vulnerabilities of their victims, he knew that Lena would do anything to feel loved.

For the next 3 months, Lena was trafficked to countless buyers.

He kept her on the move, switching from motel to motel to evade detection.

Finally, after tracking a BackPage advertisement her trafficker posted, police located Lena.

They arrested her trafficker in the hotel next door. With her help, the police ultimately charged her trafficker.

Debbie, Cheryl and Lena are all human trafficking survivors.

The things they had to endure are more horrific than most of us can even imagine.

But they survived, they overcame this tragedy.

It was for survivors like these women that CAROLYN MALONEY and I drafted the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act two years ago.

This far-reaching legislation, led by Senator JOHN CORNYN and Senator RON WYDEN in the Senate, made it clear that Congress would no longer turn a blind eye to this scourge in our society.

We wanted to ensure that victims were treated like victims, given the care and help they needed to overcome the evil inflicted upon them.

We also wanted to make sure that the traffickers and the buyers were both brought to justice.

HOUSTON SUPER BOWL STORY

This past February, my hometown of Houston, Texas, hosted the 51st Super bowl.

For most Americans the Super Bowl is a fun filled day spent with friends and family cheering on a favorite team.

But for trafficking slaves and potential trafficking slaves, if can be a very dangerous time.

Studies show that big events like Super Bowls create large upticks in the trafficking and purchasing of sex trafficking victims.

In order to counteract this, The Department of Homeland Security, as part of its Blue Campaign Initiative, began preparing months in advance.

DHS agents came to Washington, DC and briefed me and other members of the Texas Delegation on their anti-trafficking strategy for super bowl weekend.

Through the Blue Campaign, DHS raises public awareness, forges anti-trafficking partnerships and brings suspected human traffickers to justice.

I commend the Blue Campaign for collaborating with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in preparation for the Super Bowl.

As a direct result of this large multi-agency operation, over 750 people were arrested across 15 different states.

At least 86 victims were rescued, and many more were likely spared being forced into the trafficking industry.

Having personally worked closely with the Blue Campaign on this, and many other operations, I see firsthand the important role DHS has in fighting the scourge of human trafficking.

This DHS Blue Campaign Authorization Act will ensure that this critically important program continues to provide safety to victims and justice to their traffickers.

SUCCESS OF JVTA AT 2 YEAR MARK

Over the last two years, more than 65 defendants have been charged with federal human trafficking violations.

Of those, 10 were buyers.

Without demand, there would be no market.

JVTA gives law enforcement the critical tools it needs to capture and prosecute criminals who purchase sex from minors or trafficking victims.

Long gone are the days where buyers could anonymously purchase sex from trafficking victims and simply return to their normal lives.

JVT also allows a federal judge to impose an additional assessment of up to $5,000.

This money then goes into the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund.

This fund provides victims with increased access to services and resources.

It forces the criminals to pay the rent on the courthouse, forces both the buyer and the trafficker to pay for the system they created.

They inflicted pain and suffering on innocent people, they should be the ones to pay.

JVTA also clarified that the U.S. Marshals Service can assist local, state and federal law enforcement in the search and rescue of missing children.

Since the implementation of JVTA, U.S. Marshals have helped rescue 102 children.

As JVTA continues to be implemented, and prosecutors and judges are trained on the new tools it offers them, we will continue to see more and more traffickers and buyers held accountable for their crimes.

We will also see a system that treats victims like victims, providing them with the care and support they need to become survivors.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. POE of Texas. Tonight we have this Special Order, and we have several Members who are going to speak on this. The first Member who will speak is Representative WAGNER. She has served in the House since 2013, and she has, herself, worked extensively on human trafficking issues. She is a cosponsor of the Shame Act that I have sponsored, and we have worked together. I am honored to introduce her as our first speaker on this very important issue of the human trafficking after 2 years of the legislation being signed. I yield to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for the opportunity to co-lead this Special Order with my dear colleague, Congressman TED POE, for Human Trafficking Awareness Week.

I was thrilled, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday the House passed my legislation, the Put Trafficking Victims First Act. Together, we can get victims of trafficking out of dangerous and abusive situations and create better, more accessible trauma-informed services. Victims don't just need to be rescued. They need opportunities to rebuild and sort through trauma and to live well.

My bill advances a survivor-centered approach to addressing human trafficking that ensures the safety, confidentiality, and the well-being of victims. It encourages stakeholders to recognize symptoms of trauma and coping mechanisms that may impact victims' interactions with law enforcement, the justice system, and service providers.

One of the key ways we can address the upsetting realities of human trafficking in the U.S. justice system is by giving victims a pathway to vacate and expunge their criminal records for offenses that they were forced to commit. I have met with many survivors in my home State of Missouri and across our great country who struggle to rebuild their lives because they are trailed by criminal records. Traffickers and pimps intentionally push victims to commit crimes as a means of control.

My heart breaks for these women who have suffered horrendous abuse and bear the mark of a record on top of it. Criminal records make it difficult for survivors to get jobs, medical care, education, and even housing assistance. These records haunt survivors and can even lead to revictimization.

Mr. Speaker, if we are serious about giving survivors of trafficking a second chance, we must enact serious, foolproof vacatur laws that erase the collateral consequences of treating trafficking victims like criminals. This is why I introduced, along with the support of many of my colleagues, the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act. This bill would give victims of trafficking relief from Federal or D.C. criminal convictions or arrests.

We know well that Federal courts are not—and I underscore ''not''—infallible, and that many victims are trafficked within the District. These women don't deserve criminal records. They deserve restitution, civil damages, and the empowerment to walk with their heads held high.

I am adamant that these women get a second chance at life, that they find housing, therapy, jobs, new friends, and new chances. I am adamant that the United States of America will no longer punish people for trauma that most of us cannot even imagine. I am adamant that the United States Congress will have the moral aptitude to enact the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act. I am adamant that not one more victim of trafficking will be mistreated in our criminal justice system. Mr. Speaker, I am adamant that we pass this bill into law.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. I would like to ask a couple of questions if she doesn't mind. I know she has other appointments, but I wanted to ask her a couple questions. I would like to know how has the trafficking situation in her home State of Missouri decreased, or how has this legislation helped?

Mrs. WAGNER. Well, I will tell the gentleman that the legislation that he and I have worked on for a number of years and that he has spent the better part of a lifetime as a judge and as a legislator on is saving lives; but, sadly, my hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, would be ranked in the top 20 counties or cities in the Nation for human trafficking. So the problem is prevalent. It exists still.

What breaks my heart most of all are those children who have been victimized, whether it is by online predators or other means, those who are the most vulnerable in our society. We have been able to work with many of the safe houses, with our prosecutors, with our law enforcement, with our advocacy groups.

As Congressman POE and I both know, we can't always legislate all the ills of society away. What I appreciate about the work that we do is not only passing laws and legislation to help those victims, but also the education and awareness that is so very important. So anything that we can do to lift those advocates up, to bring a spotlight to this modern-day slavery is so very important.

I commend the gentleman from Texas for his work and for the Special Order here tonight. I look forward to a day when this heinous crime, this modern-day slavery no longer exists in the United States of America.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments. I also wanted to compliment her on her tenacious work of going after backpage.com and making that resource unavailable for those traffickers and those buyers. I want to commend her for that.

Mrs. WAGNER. I thank the gentleman. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that these online predators are the bane of our existence. It is a dark underbelly of the human trafficking and sex slavery trade that is out there, and it is absolutely unconscionable that crimes can be committed online that would not be allowed to be committed offline. We are going to go to the heart of the Communications Decency Act with my next piece of legislation that so many attorneys general and States and prosecutors and law enforcement and advocacy groups are begging for Congress to act to make sure that there is clarity so that States and the Federal Government can prosecute, and to make sure that we make the changes that are necessary in a very specific and narrow way to make sure that those online predators are not victimizing the children, women, and young boys of our land.

I look forward to working with the gentleman and my colleagues on much more work in this arena.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman being here and making such powerful comments.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD). She is an Iraqi war veteran and a former member of the Hawaii House of Representatives. She is working specifically, among other things, in the area of the juvenile justice system, trying to reform that.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague for his leadership on this and many other issues, really taking up this cause and being a champion for the voiceless.

Last month I was in my district in Hawaii, and we traveled all across the State, on every island, holding townhall meetings on a variety of issues, but one of the meetings and forums that I participated in was at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, and it was specifically around this issue of human trafficking, of sex trafficking.

In this small community in Hawaii, many people had gathered—it was a full room—trying to increase their own awareness and share more information about the prevalence of this issue, not just in places in other parts of the world, but in our communities right here at home. I think that is something that surprises a lot of folks that I talk to, is you can read about these human trafficking problems in cities in Asia or other parts of the world, but very rarely do people think that it is happening in their own backyard, in their own hometown, when the reality is that this is a very real issue that exists in far too many of our hometowns and our communities all across the country.

In my own home State of Hawaii, girls as young as 11 years old have been recruited from schools, from beaches, from malls through an intricate network of sex traffickers. In 2016, last year, 30 cases of human trafficking were reported to the human trafficking hotline in Hawaii. Almost all of them had to do with the exploitation of women for sex and labor, and in 10 of these cases the individuals targeted were minors.

Now, what we know and what is terribly disturbing is how underreported this actually is, that these numbers are not at all representative of the reality that exists in our community because trafficking is more common than the number of cases reported.

Now, too often those who are victims of and those who are forced into trafficking are charged as criminals and are forced to live with this criminal record for the rest of their lives, never being able to escape the shackles of nonviolent crimes committed in the course of their being victims of human trafficking. This often inhibits them from getting the care and assistance that they really need, to be free, to be able to move on with their lives.

Our current criminal justice system is broken in so many ways, and in so many ways perpetuates a cycle of crime, exploitation, and poverty, stripping the most exploited and vulnerable individuals in our society of a fair chance for a new life and healing from unimaginable abuses perpetuated by truly evil criminals.

Now, at the local level in States like Hawaii, we have passed legislation that bans sex trafficking and classifies it as a class A felony, but that is not enough. That is why I am so proud to be a cosponsor of the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act, because it creates this promise of freedom for those survivors from the shackles of their past. It establishes a process to vacate convictions and expunge arrests for those charged with criminal offenses related to human trafficking, finally putting survivors on a path to rehabilitation and healing rather than a life of continued exploitation and abuse.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to get this legislation passed and actually enact this change so it helps those in our communities who need it the most.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Hawaii for her work on this. As you can tell, this is a bipartisan effort. When we took this legislation 2 years ago and brought it to the House, there were 11 bills that came to the House of Representatives, and they almost all passed unanimously. Then they were sent to the Senate, and the Senate combined them into two bills. The same over there, almost unanimous; and then back over to the House, and the final passage was almost unanimous once again. It is a bipartisan effort, and I thank the gentlewoman from Hawaii for her work on this and her service to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER). He is one of our newest, if not the newest, Members of Congress. He served in the Pennsylvania State Senate for a good number of years.

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Judge POE for the work that he is doing this evening to bring attention to a critical problem that desperately needs our attention and needs our solutions, that of human trafficking.

The three largest international crime industries are drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and human trafficking. It is uncomfortable to talk about, but we can't shy away from talking about the fact that in the world today, young boys and girls are being sold across the globe for an average price of $90. It is not just in remote parts of the globe. More than 14,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year. It is happening all across America, and in Lancaster, Berks, and Chester Counties, the district that I represent in Pennsylvania.

□ 1900

Four out of five people trafficked in the world today are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Eighty percent are female and half are children.

Antitrafficking groups gather in our churches, restaurants, and schools all across Pennsylvania and across the country. Those individuals, and the victims of trafficking, should know that they have allies in Congress.

My office has been in contact with organizations in my district like Safe Berks, the Chester County Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition, and law enforcement officials to discuss ways that we can work together to help victims.

I am also very pleased to cosponsor the bipartisan Trafficking Survivors Relief Act, introduced by my colleague ANN WAGNER, who was here with us this evening, from Missouri, a leader on this issue.

Victims of trafficking are forced to commit crimes like prostitution, drug dealing, and money laundering. We cannot punish these victims for crimes committed because of coercion and under the threat of violence or death.

We must ensure that we are doing all we can to help victims recover from these unthinkable experiences. This legislation will help to do that by providing more judicial discretion for victims to clear their names of any wrongdoing.

I am proud to stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation that helps end this barbaric practice.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his comments, and now for his work on this issue of trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), another Ted here in Congress. TED YOHO is serving Florida's Congressional District 3. He is vice chairman of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the chairman of U.S. House Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee. He has supported many bills on this issue of trafficking and has worked very hard in his home State of Florida to bring awareness to this.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Judge POE for his tireless work on this issue. And I appreciate the leadership, and LLOYD SMUCKER. And as he has talked about, this is a bipartisan issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to modern-day slavery, because that is what this is, in the form of human trafficking.

Most people believe human trafficking only occurs at home. It is a foreign crime that would never happen in our community, let alone their own backyard. To that I say: Let me tell you about human trafficking in rural America.

I come from a district that is very rural. We had several summits on this issue. We talked to the local sheriffs and to the local police departments, and they said: Do you know what, we don't have that problem here. We are okay.

We invoked the help of the Department of Homeland Security, and they have got a great campaign called the Blue Campaign. We encouraged these officers to show up. And I am happy to say that most of the people that we talked to—the counties and the sheriffs—showed up.

And it wasn't more than about 2 weeks that I started getting calls from the sheriffs. And they said: Do you know what, that is happening right here.

It is an awareness campaign. And Ms. GABBARD from Hawaii mentioned how underreported it is. Of course, it is, if

people aren't aware of it. But when you bring awareness through campaigns like the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign, people wake up to this issue. And I love their motto: If you see something, say something. Let people know this is going on.

So let me tell you about our home community. In March of this year, a special needs student in Jacksonville, Florida, was kidnapped. Her captors placed her under house arrest, basically. They incarcerated her for human trafficking. They placed an advertisement online offering her sexual services, which is quite possibly the only reason the police were able to find her. These people were advertising on the internet.

Also, in March of this year, 15 men were arrested in my hometown of Gainesville, Florida, on child solicitation charges. These men were discovered as part of an undercover operation that led them to believe they were communicating with young girls. The men believed the girls' guardians were allowing them to commit sexual acts with underage girls.

Only 2 months prior to this arrest, a Gainesville man was sentenced to 25 years in prison for sex trafficking an adult.

A month prior to that, Polk County—another rural county—detectives arrested 114 suspects in a human trafficking and prostitution ring. At least four of them were immediately identified as human trafficking victims. And merely 3 months later, an additional 104 were picked up in a second sting for human trafficking, including those soliciting sex from minors.

These are but a few examples of human trafficking-related crimes that have occurred in my community in the last 6 months. Florida is estimated to have the third highest rate of human trafficking in the country, following only behind California and New York—third in the Nation. That is not something any State wants a designation for. All three of these States are ideal because of their access to ports and interstate highways, allowing victims to be transported across State lines easily.

And it is estimated today—and I, again, sit on the Foreign Affairs Committee with Judge POE, and we have seen these numbers too often. It is estimated that 21 million people are trafficked around the world, resulting in an estimated $150 billion in profits—profits from the sale of a human individual that goes to the traffickers who are often drug smugglers or terrorist organizations.

The 13th Amendment to our Constitution abolished slavery in this country. However, it still exists, and it is right in our own backyard. Because of this, we need to do all that we can to eradicate this.

The runaway child is picked up within 48 hours and forced within the sex trade. This is something that, if you believe in the 13th Amendment, we all need to stand up, take an active role in this, and we do this by the legislation that is up.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Judge for being a strong advocate and always being there for this.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, how many minutes do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE). She, like the women in Congress, who I have given a lot of credit for all of this trafficking legislation, is very concerned about victims of family and domestic violence.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise as an original cosponsor of the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act of 2017, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this truly bipartisan piece of legislation.

We have come a long way in this country in recognizing and acknowledging the problems of sex trafficking; and not just laying the blame at the seat of a so-called prostitute but understanding that this is a crime where the persons being trafficked, as you have heard my colleagues say, are imprisoned in sex trafficking. And why is it?

You heard them talk about the $150 billion impact that this has. There is a huge incentive to sell these women over and over and over and over again. Because unlike drugs, you can resell these products of these victims again.

Survivors of sex trafficking can't just walk away. They are in prison. They endure violent beatings, brainwashing, sexual assault, psychological control, and control of their purses and their identification. But then they find themselves arrested and convicted for prostitution, labeled as sex offenders, and then just revictimized by a system that doesn't understand that they were prisoners of this lucrative operation.

These survivors face long-term negative consequences. They are denied access to employment, housing resources, and student financial aid that is needed to develop a sustainable safe and stable life. The Trafficking Survivors Relief Act offers survivors postconviction relief from criminal charges stemming from nonviolent offenses committed as a direct result of being a victim of human trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, an estimated 300,000 children become victims of sex trafficking every year through fraud, force, and coercion. Many of them think, You know, I am going to be taken out to dinner by someone who loves me, and find themselves imprisoned at that very moment. Many of them are then arrested for these crimes that they are forced to commit.

In my State of Wisconsin, 79 percent of human trafficking cases reported in Wisconsin occur in my district, I am ashamed to say.

In the city of Milwaukee, last year, as an example, Mr. Speaker, two sisters, ages 16 and 17, were rescued during the FBI's Operation Cross Country. They told an undercover Federal agent that their mother had forced them into prostitution. Had they been arrested, instead of recovered from their mother, who imprisoned them, would they have deserved to be branded for life with a criminal record?

Imagine every time that they applied for housing or for financial aid or for a job, that they would be denied on the basis of their criminal record; and they were coerced into this act as minors by their own mother. Imagine the re-traumatization and further devastation that repeated denial would have caused them.

It just makes these people so vulnerable, and it deserves a legislative solution that we are proposing here today.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her strong comments. I know where she stands on the issue of victims of violence.

Mr. Speaker, the 2-year anniversary of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act will be Monday. As a former judge and co-chairman of the Victims' Rights Caucus, with JIM COSTA from California, this is an important issue. I bet most Americans have never heard of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act because it was passed with bipartisan support, overwhelming support. Things like this don't make the news because we are not fussing and feuding between the two sides.

But it is a very important piece of legislation for our country. It goes after the trafficker. It makes sure they get arrested, and they go to prison where they belong. It also goes after the buyer, the person who hides and tries to buy young children on the marketplace of sex slavery. But it rescues victims and turns them into survivors. That is why this legislation is important.

The average age of a trafficking victim in the United States is 13. That means some are younger than 13. And it is a menace and a scourge that we, in the House of Representatives, along with our friends in the Senate, are going to make sure that the legislation is appropriate to solve this epidemic. That is why we are reminding individuals that we have this piece of legislation that is passed, and other pieces of legislation as well.

The last thing I wanted to mention is part of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act allows Federal judges to impose a fee on the trafficker or the buyer, and that money goes into a fund that helps victims of trafficking. That is a great idea. Make the criminals pay the rent on the courthouse by this type of restitution program.

I want to thank all of the people who helped out tonight. There is a lot more to be said about the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. We are going to continue to bring awareness of it to the American public.

I can tell you one thing, though, traffickers and buyers know about this legislation. With the help of local and State and Federal law enforcement, we are going to stop this sale of our children and adult women here in the United States for money.

And that is just the way it is.

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, this week, as the House of Representatives considers human trafficking legislation, I am proud to continue working with colleagues from both sides of the aisle to raise awareness on the heinous practice of human trafficking and to work together to eradicate it from our communities.

I thank my friend and classmate, Congresswoman ANN WAGNER of Missouri (MO–02) for organizing tonight's Special Order Hour.

Human trafficking—where people profit from the control and exploitation of others—occurs both here at home and abroad on a daily basis.

In fact, the International Labour Organization estimates that there are 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally—68% of them are trapped in forced labor, 26% of them are children, and 55% are women and girls.

And in my home state of Ohio, human trafficking for sex and labor is on the rise.

According to recent reports from the Polaris Project, a nonprofit that tracks trafficking in the U.S. and abroad, 375 Ohio trafficking cases were reported from 1,352 calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2016. In 2015, there were 289 cases based on 1,070 calls. The 2016 numbers reflect a nearly four-fold increase over the Ohio figures from 2013.

While the overall increase in reporting can be partly attributed to greater awareness of the national hotline, we know, and officials confirm, that trafficking is, unfortunately, chronically under-reported.

We must do more to help trafficking victims and to encourage people when they see something that looks like an individual is being trafficked, that they say something.

Victims of human trafficking often live in the shadows of our society, so it is up to all of us to help identify and rescue victims of trafficking.

While human trafficking spans all demographics, there are some circumstances or vulnerabilities that lead to a higher susceptibility to victimization.

Runaway and homeless youth, as well as victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, are frequently targeted by traffickers.

Men and women, boys and girls, who are all alone, abused, and often believe they have nowhere to go.

Well, we can help. We must do more to assist victims of trafficking and provide them with the services and treatment necessary to regain control of their lives.

We must also ensure the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes is focused on the traffickers, the people assisting the traffickers, and the purchasers—the individuals who are the real criminals in the enterprise.

Almost two years ago, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—or the JVTA—was signed into law. The JVTA is helping to update efforts to combat the scourge of human trafficking and provided essential resources to survivors and law enforcement officials.

I am proud to have had a provision included in this comprehensive legislation and to have taken part in its drafting, passage, and enactment.

Mr. Speaker, since the JVTA's enactment, we have witnessed important achievements, but we cannot stop here.

We must continue to work together to eradicate human trafficking and support the victims. Tonight, I pledge to continue to working with my colleagues to raise awareness and fight back against human trafficking, because as we all know, one victim of human trafficking is one too many.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of traveling with the Vice President to Louisiana for official business.

Ms. MCSALLY (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for after 12 p.m. today and for the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

Mr. KIHUEN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 4 p.m. and tomorrow.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 366. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1420. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Daniel B. Allyn, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1421. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries [Docket Nos.: 120328229-4949-02 and 150121066-5717-02] (RIN: 0648-XF210) received May 22, 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.

1422. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final specifications — Pacific Island Fisheries; 2016 Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures [Docket No.: 160422356-7283-02] (RIN: 0648-XE587) received May 22, 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.

1423. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries [Docket No.: 150121066-5717-02] (RIN: 0648-XF259) received May 22, 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.

1424. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Office of Strategic Operations and Regulatory Affairs, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Medicare Program; Advancing Care Coordination Through Episode Payment Models (EPMs); Cardiac Rehabilitation Incentive Payment Model; and Changes to the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Model (CJR) [CMS-5519-F] (RIN: 0938-AS90) received May 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

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. JEFFRIES (for himself, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DONOVAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida):

H.R. 2617. A bill to provide first-time, low-level, nonviolent simple possession offenders under age 25 an opportunity to expunge that conviction after successful completion of court-imposed probation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Ms. SÁNCHEZ):

H.R. 2618. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide further tax incentives for dependent care assistance; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2619. A bill to prohibit the Coast Guard from establishing any new anchorage grounds in the Hudson River, New York, until it reports to the Congress on the potential impact of such anchorage grounds to sites listed on the National Priorities List and to critical habitat; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah (for himself, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. PEARCE,

Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. MESSER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. STEWART, Mr. EMMER, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. ROUZER, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. RATCLIFFE, and Mr. BANKS of Indiana):

H.R. 2620. A bill to revise various laws that interfere with the right of the people to obtain and use firearms for all lawful purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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. THORNBERRY:

H.R. 2621. A bill to strengthen security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and 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. LYNCH (for himself and Mr. KING of New York):

H.R. 2622. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to include all funds when issuing certain geographic targeting orders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 2623. A bill to provide for a method by which the economic costs of significant regulatory actions may be offset by the repeal of other regulatory actions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 2624. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand school choice opportunities for children of active duty members of the Armed Forces of the United States; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MCGOVERN (for himself, Mr. JONES, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. EVANS, Mr. HIMES, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. COHEN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. POLIS, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CLAY, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. POCAN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 2625. A bill to establish a grant program to encourage the use of assistance dogs by certain members of the Armed Forces and veterans; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 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. HURD (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 2626. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and the Immigration and Nationality Act to improve visa security, visa applicant vetting, 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. HURD (for himself, Mr. VELA, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 2627. A bill to authorize the development of open-source software based on certain systems of the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State to facilitate the vetting of travelers against terrorist watchlists and law enforcement databases, enhance border management, and improve targeting and analysis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. GENE GREEN of Texas (for himself and Mr. BARTON):

H.R. 2628. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment of individuals under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida (for himself, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. COLE, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Mr. SMUCKER, and Mr. FERGUSON):

H.R. 2629. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to provide for appropriate designation of collective bargaining units; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. GOSAR (for himself, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. BIGGS):

H.R. 2630. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land to La Paz County, Arizona, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. JONES, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. WALZ, Mr. GALLEGO, and Mr. CONYERS):

H.R. 2631. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the scope of procedural rights of members of the uniformed services with respect to their employment and reemployment rights, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CLAY (for himself and Mrs. WAGNER):

H.R. 2632. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to undertake remediation oversight of the West Lake Landfill located in Bridgeton, Missouri; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 2633. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and make the credit fully refundable; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DESJARLAIS (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. COOPER, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee):

H.R. 2634. A bill to designate the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Facility Expansion of the Department of Veteran Affairs' Alvin C. York Medical Center in Murfreesboro, Tennessee as the 'Sergeant John Toombs Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Facility'; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. HANABUSA (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. LEE, Mr. SOTO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 2635. A bill to exempt children of certain Filipino World War II veterans from the numerical limitations on immigrant visas and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio (for himself and Mr. OLSON):

H.R. 2636. A bill to establish an independent inspector general for the Federal Communications Commission; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 2637. A bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to reauthorize the Fishing Safety Training Grant Program and the Fishing Safety Research Grant Program; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. GARAMENDI):

H.R. 2638. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an increased work opportunity credit with respect to recent veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. MEEHAN):

H.R. 2639. A bill to reauthorize the Elder Justice Act of 2009; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Energy and Commerce, and 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. LEWIS of Georgia (for himself and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H.R. 2640. A bill to prohibit discrimination in adoption or foster care placements based on the sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status of any prospective adoptive or foster parent, or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child involved; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LONG (for himself and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico):

H.R. 2641. A bill to promote the development of safe drugs for neonates; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 2642. A bill to allow certain Indonesian citizens to file a motion to reopen their asylum claims; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARINO (for himself, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. DONOVAN):

H.R. 2643. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to require the annual human rights reports to include information on the institutionalization of children and the subjection of children to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, unnecessary detention, and denial of the right to life, liberty, and the security of persons, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MARINO (for himself, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. ROSKAM):

H.R. 2644. A bill to improve the understanding of, and promote access to treatment for, chronic kidney disease, 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 Mrs. MURPHY of Florida (for herself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. SOTO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. COOPER, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. CRIST, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. COSTA, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER):

H.R. 2645. A bill to amend the National Security Act of 1947 to provide for congressional notification of disclosures of top secret information to certain foreign countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. SCHIFF):

H.R. 2646. A bill to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER:

H.R. 2647. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the 10 percent threshold on the deduction for medical expenses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. STIVERS (for himself and Mr. TAKANO):

H.R. 2648. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the requirements that new Federal employees who are veterans with service-connected disabilities are provided leave for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disabilities apply to certain employees of the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 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 Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN (for herself and Mr. CARTWRIGHT):

H.R. 2649. A bill to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to apply certain procedures before granting a certificate of public convenience and necessity for a proposed pipeline project, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. CONNOLLY):

H. Con. Res. 61. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that all trade agreements the United States enters into, should provide reasonable access and collaboration of each nation involved in such an agreement, for the purpose of search and recovery activities relating to members of the United States Armed Forces missing in action from prior wars or military conflicts; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. TENNEY (for herself, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mrs. HARTZLER, and Mrs. WAGNER):

H. Con. Res. 62. Concurrent resolution to urge the President to direct the United States representative to the United Nations to use the voice and vote of the United States to hold the United Nations and its member states accountable for allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by United Nations peacekeepers; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MOULTON (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mrs. HARTZLER, and Mr. MEEKS):

H. Res. 353. A resolution supporting a democratic Hungary and reaffirming the long-standing and mutually-beneficial relationship between the United States and Hungary; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. ROYCE of California (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MCCARTHY, Mr. HOYER, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LANCE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr. GOODLATTE):

H. Res. 354. A resolution condemning the violence against peaceful protesters outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence on May 16, 2017, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. MEEKS (for himself, Mr. COOK, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. KEATING, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. DENT, and Mr. GOODLATTE):

H. Res. 355. A resolution condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks in Manchester, United Kingdom, on May 22, 2017, expressing heartfelt condolences, and reaffirming unwavering support for the special relationship between our peoples and nations in the wake of these attacks; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H. Res. 356. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Senate should give its advice and consent to the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

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. JEFFRIES:

H.R. 2617.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I.

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States . . .

Article I

Section 8.

Clause 18. To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper . . .

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 2618.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2619.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H.R. 2620.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Second Amendment of the United States Constitution

By Mr. THORNBERRY:

H.R. 2621.

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 provide for the common Defence'', ''to raise and support Armies'', ''to provide and maintain a Navy'' and ''to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces'' as enumerated in Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. LYNCH:

H.R. 2622.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 section 8 Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 2623.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section I grants that ''All legislative Powers herin granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States . . .'' Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 grants that ''The Congress shall have Power to . . . Regulate Commerce . . . Among the several States . . .'' Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 grants that ''The Congress shall have Power To . . . Make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by [the] Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 2624.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MCGOVERN:

H.R. 2625.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8: to provide for the Common Defense.

By Mr. HURD:

H.R. 2626.

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 Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

and

Article 1, section 8, clause 18;To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. HURD:

H.R. 2627.

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 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. GENE GREEN of Texas:
H.R. 2628.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.
By Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida:
H.R. 2629.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3
By Mr. GOSAR:
H.R. 2630.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause)—Under this clause, Congress has the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States. By virtue of this enumerated power, Congress has governing authority over the lands, territories, or other property of the United States—and with this authority Congress is vested with the power to all owners in fee, the ability to sell, lease, dispose, exchange, convey, or simply preserve land.
The Supreme Court has described this enumerated grant as one ''without limitation'' Kleppe v New Mexico, 426 U.S. 529, 542–543 (1976) (''And while the furthest reaches of the power granted by the Property Clause have not been definitely resolved, we have repeatedly observed that the power over the public land thus entrusted to Congress is without limitation.'')
Historically, the federal government transferred ownership of federal property to either private ownership or the states in order to pay off large Revolutionary War debts and to assist with the development of infrastructure. The transfers codified by this legislation are thus constitutional.
By Mr. CICILLINE:
H.R. 2631.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, sec. 8.
By Mr. CLAY:
H.R. 2632.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:
H.R. 2633.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I of the Constitution and its subsequent amendments and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States
By Mr. DESJARLAIS:
H.R. 2634.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution
By Ms. HANABUSA:
H.R. 2635.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio:
H.R. 2636.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following.
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution
By Mr. KEATING:
H.R. 2637.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. KING of New York:
H.R. 2638.
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.
By Mr. KING of New York:
H.R. 2639.
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 Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.
By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:
H.R. 2640.
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. 2641.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution, which states ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.''
By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:
H.R. 2642.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4: To establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States.
By Mr. MARINO:
H.R. 2643.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18(Necessary and Proper Clause) the Congress shall have 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. MARINO:
H.R. 2644.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18(Necessary and Proper Clause) the Congress shall have 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 Mrs. MURPHY of Florida:
H.R. 2645.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, which gives Congress the power to provide for the common defense and to make all laws necessary and proper to carry out this power.
By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:
H.R. 2646.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution
By Mr. SENSENBRENNER:
H.R. 2647.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1
By Mr. STIVERS:
H.R. 2648.
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. WATSON COLEMAN:
H.R. 2649.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 Clauses 3 and 18

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 10: Mr. ROYCE of California.
H.R. 19: Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BEYER, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. SOTO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. PLASKETT, and Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 169: Mr. DESAULNIER and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.
H.R. 173: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 227: Ms. BARRAGÁN.
H.R. 291: Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 299: Mr. EVANS, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 303: Mr. DELANEY, Mr. MASSIE, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. KEATING, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, and Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 305: Ms. ADAMS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 358: Mr. GOSAR, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. WALKER, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. KING of Iowa, and Mr. COLE.
H.R. 361: Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 377: Mr. WALBERG and Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 421: Mr. CHAFFETZ.
H.R. 433: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 469: Mr. PALMER.
H.R. 478: Mr. GARRETT.
H.R. 490: Mr. BARTON, Mrs. ROBY, and Ms. TENNEY.
H.R. 519: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 525: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI.
H.R. 535: Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 548: Mr. SMUCKER.
H.R. 564: Mr. GUTHRIE.
H.R. 676: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 681: Mr. MAST and Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 721: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia and Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H.R. 731: Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 749: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 785: Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 820: Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. SOTO, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, and Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 821: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 830: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 845: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 849: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DENHAM, and Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 881: Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 916: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 995: Mr. FASO.
H.R. 1017: Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. NEAL, Mr. THORNBERRY, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1038: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.
H.R. 1045: Mr. HUDSON.
H.R. 1046: Mr. ROUZER and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 1057: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. PANETTA, and Mr. EMMER.
H.R. 1059: Mr. MAST.
H.R. 1065: Mr. TROTT.
H.R. 1083: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1133: Mr. PALMER.
H.R. 1200: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 1227: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 1239: Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 1247: Mr. QUIGLEY and Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 1279: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 1291: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1298: Mr. BARR and Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 1300: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 1317: Mr. DUNN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 1361: Mr. GALLEGO and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 1421: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 1478: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 1494: Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. TROTT, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 1512: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 1516: Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 1555: Mr. EMMER and Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.
H.R. 1560: Mr. ABRAHAM and Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 1599: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 1626: Mr. EMMER and Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 1627: Mr. MAST.
H.R. 1651: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN and Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 1676: Mr. EMMER and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 1683: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 1697: Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. EMMER, Mr. ESTES of Kansas, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. FOXX, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. ABRAHAM, and Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 1698: Ms. BASS, Mr. ALLEN, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. COLE, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. GOHMERT, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. ESTES of Kansas, and Mr. HULTGREN.
H.R. 1699: Mr. ADERHOLT.
H.R. 1777: Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. PERRY, and Mr. SHUSTER.
H.R. 1784: Mr. GARAMENDI and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.
H.R. 1785: Mr. SMUCKER.
H.R. 1825: Mr. REICHERT, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. WALZ, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Ms. SINEMA, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 1841: Mr. ROHRABACHER.
H.R. 1844: Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. JEFFRIES.
H.R. 1847: Mr. TROTT and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 1860: Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 1873: Ms. MCSALLY.
H.R. 1881: Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana.
H.R. 1889: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1928: Mr. MCKINLEY, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Mr. VALADAO.
H.R. 1939: Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, and Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 1993: Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 1997: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2000: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 2001: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 2012: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 2020: Mr. ROHRABACHER.
H.R. 2023: Mr. UPTON and Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 2040: Mr. BERGMAN.
H.R. 2056: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 2079: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2123: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 2133: Mr. ROTHFUS and Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 2147: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 2170: Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana.
H.R. 2175: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 2176: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 2197: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
H.R. 2210: Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. PERRY, Mr. SMUCKER, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 2239: Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 2240: Mr. PASCRELL and Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2272: Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.
H.R. 2290: Ms. PINGREE, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. EVANS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 2298: Mr. BRAT.
H.R. 2310: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey and Mr. HOLDING.
H.R. 2328: Mr. EVANS, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. RASKIN, and Mrs. DINGELL.
H.R. 2340: Mr. DENHAM and Mr. LAMALFA.
H.R. 2351: Ms. SLAUGHTER and Mr. RICHMOND.
H.R. 2353: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia.
H.R. 2366: Mr. ESPAILLAT.
H.R. 2372: Mr. ISSA, Mr. DENHAM, and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 2375: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 2383: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
H.R. 2412: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 2422: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. HECK, Ms. NORTON, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 2434: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 2452: Mr. MAST.
H.R. 2477: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 2484: Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2500: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 2506: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 2526: Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. TITUS, Mr. HECK, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 2542: Mr. POLIS and Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 2545: Mr. COOK.
H.R. 2552: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 2564: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2583: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 2608: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. TORRES, and Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 2613: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.J. Res. 51: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama and Mr. MEADOWS.
H. Con. Res. 13: Mr. NUNES, Mr. POSEY, Mr. ROSKAM, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.
H. Con. Res. 43: Mrs. DINGELL.
H. Con. Res. 55: Mr. CHABOT and Mr. LOUDERMILK.
H. Con. Res. 57: Mr. LAMBORN.
H. Res. 31: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H. Res. 129: Mr. DELANEY.
H. Res. 188: Mr. AMODEI.
H. Res. 201: Mr. ROTHFUS and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H. Res. 206: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H. Res. 218: Mr. GOSAR.
H. Res. 239: Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California and Mr. KEATING.
H. Res. 259: Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H. Res. 276: Mr. POLIS and Mr. LANGEVIN.
H. Res. 296: Mr. LAMALFA.
H. Res. 307: Mr. DESANTIS.
H. Res. 309: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H. Res. 318: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mr. NOLAN.
H. Res. 335: Mr. TAKANO.
H. Res. 336: Mr. TED LIEU of California and Mr. KEATING.
H. Res. 337: Mr. STIVERS.
H. Res. 351: Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mrs. WAGNER, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. POLIS, Mr. KEATING, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. KATKO, and Mrs. LOWEY.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017 No. 90

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Gracious and loving God, You continue to give us reasons for rejoicing in Your love and grace. We praise You for the beauty of the sunrise and the glory of the sunset.

Today, guide our lawmakers with Your wisdom and love, empowering them to strengthen men and women on life's journey. Lord, help our Senators to remember that nothing is impossible for You, for Your grace and might hold the galaxies in place.

Lord, we are grateful for Your presence in this Chamber, our Nation, and our world. Use us all for Your glory and for the good of those in need. Continue to do in our lives exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we can ask or imagine.

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, May 24, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COTTON thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, a new report released last night from the Department of Health and Human Services reveals startling new numbers showing just how substantial premium increases have been under ObamaCare. According to that report, average annual ObamaCare premiums have increased by nearly $3,000 since 2013, the year that most of the healthcare law's mandates and regulations actually went into effect. In other words, it is now clear that average ObamaCare plans on the exchanges more than doubled from 2013 until now. That is an increase of 105 percent, or nearly $3,000. These figures are based on the Obama administration's own data, but these exorbitant costs are just one part of the problem, to say nothing of the shrinking choices of insurers offering plans on the ObamaCare exchanges across the country.

Last week, our colleague from Iowa, Chairman GRASSLEY, came to the floor and shared with us the story of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, a bridge in Washington State that was, as he put it, ''set to fail from the very beginning.'' He told us how the bridge was built on a ''flawed design,'' how it ''self-destructed,'' and how it eventually ''collapsed.'' Much like that bridge, he said, ObamaCare is becoming ''its own bridge to nowhere with no insurance plan on its exchanges.'' Boy, he is right about that.

As time goes on, more Americans are finding themselves with fewer ObamaCare insurance options to choose from on the exchanges. Take a look at the map behind me, and you will see what I mean. On this map: Fewer choices: Number of insurers on the ObamaCare exchanges in 2017. What does it reflect?

In more than 1,000 counties across 26 States, families have only 1—just 1—ObamaCare option to choose from in the marketplace. ObamaCare customers in five States have only one insurer left on the exchanges. As a recent article predicted, ''insurer choice in the ACA marketplace could hit an all-time low'' next year in 2018.

Let that sink in for a minute. Families across the country could experience ''an all-time low'' when it comes to their choices for ObamaCare plans next year. In other words, things are likely to only get worse. Still, despite all the news reports and the studies and the personal stories shared by constituents, some of our colleagues simply refuse to face the realities of this failed law.

Consider what we saw just yesterday, when a group of Democratic Senators held a press conference, essentially advocating for the ObamaCare status quo in rural America. But in case our friends missed it, I want to share a recent headline that reveals what ObamaCare's status quo has actually meant for families in these regions of the country. Here is what it read: ''Rural Shoppers Face Slim Choices, Steep Premiums On Exchanges.''

The article went on to cite a study showing that ObamaCare customers living in less populous areas of the country in 2017 ''frequently had just

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

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one or two insurers from which to pick, and often faced significantly higher premiums than did people in more urban areas.''

Much like that dilapidated bridge Chairman GRASSLEY described, ObamaCare is self-destructing all around us. We know things are likely to get worse unless we move beyond the failures of ObamaCare. In his home State of Iowa, more than 70,000 people are facing the harsh reality that they may be left with absolutely no options—none—on the ObamaCare individual market—zero.

Many Virginians recently learned they could also have fewer choices on the ObamaCare exchanges next year. In fact, people in 27 of the State's 95 counties could have just one option for coverage through the ObamaCare marketplace in 2018. Tennesseans in 16 counties are in a similarly distressing situation, as they, too, are likely to have just one choice when it comes to signing up for insurance through the ObamaCare exchanges next year.

So these are just the latest developments in ObamaCare's dwindling options, which over the years have continuously pushed too many people off their plan and left them with fewer choices. Take one Knoxville, TN, woman who recounted her experience in a recent news article. In 2015, she signed up for an ObamaCare plan with one major insurer, but by the end of the year, that company pulled out of the marketplace, leaving her to find a new plan. In 2016, she was forced to sign up for an ObamaCare plan with another insurer. Again, at the end of the year, that company left the marketplace, as well. Now in 2017, she signed up with yet another ObamaCare plan with yet another insurer, and—you guessed it—at the end of this year, that insurance company will also exit the ObamaCare marketplace, leaving the Tennessee mom to find an alternative option one more time. Unfortunately, her story is not unique. As insurers on the exchanges continue to propose premium increases and announce their intentions for participation next year, we can expect even more troubling news to roll in.

These families deserve relief from ObamaCare—a failing law with limited, even nonexistent, choices that continue to shrink on the collapsing marketplace.

These families deserve relief from ObamaCare—a failing law with skyrocketing premiums that have risen by double-digit rate increases all across our country.

These families deserve relief from ObamaCare—a failing law with mandates that require people to buy plans that aren't right for their families, even if there are no suitable choices to pick from, even if they are too expensive to actually use.

How much more will it take for our Democratic colleagues to realize that we have to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare? The only way these families are going to get the help they need—and that so many have called for—is if we actually take action. The Republican Senate has been clear what we aren't OK with standing by and allowing this system to crash completely, dragging down even more families along with it.

We know that—just like that collapsing bridge—ObamaCare wasn't built on a sturdy foundation, nor were its policies truly built to last. Just like the bridge, it may have looked really good from the outside. We all remember the lofty claims our Democratic colleagues made about the law, but it never lived up to the fanfare. I know it is a disappointing reality for our friends across the aisle who championed the failed healthcare law. We know it is not the outcome they had hoped for, but the status quo is simply unacceptable.

We expect the Congressional Budget Office to release an updated score of the bill the House passed later today. It is a technical procedural step. Beyond likely reiterating things we already know—like that fewer people will buy a product they don't want when the government stops forcing them to—the updated report will allow the Senate procedurally to move forward in working to draft its own healthcare legislation.

So whatever CBO says about the House bill today, this much is absolutely clear: The status quo under ObamaCare is completely unacceptable and totally unsustainable. The prices are skyrocketing. Choice is plummeting. The marketplace is collapsing, and countless more Americans will get hurt if we don't act. No one should be comfortable with that. I know I am not, and I certainly hope our Democratic colleagues aren't either.

So instead of continuing to hold press conferences in what ultimately can only be described as a defense of the ObamaCare status quo, I would ask our Democratic colleagues to come to terms with the situation Americans are facing, to stop the empty rhetoric, to join us in finally helping those who have been hurt by this failing law.

NOMINATION OF AMUL THAPAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, as the Senate continues to process nominations, I would like to take a moment to say a few words about one for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit whom we will confirm this week.

Judge Amul Thapar served with distinction on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky for close to a decade, having previously served as U.S. attorney for that same district and as assistant U.S. attorney for several years before that.

He was the first South Asian American to become a Federal judge, and once he is confirmed to the Sixth Circuit, Judge Thapar will be only the second South Asian American to serve on a Federal circuit court.

The American Bar Association has given him its highest rating—unanimously ''well qualified.'' That meant that in the group that rated him there was no one who didn't give him a ''well qualified'' rating, which is the best they could give any nominee. I certainly couldn't agree more with that characterization.

Judge Thapar is an excellent jurist. I know he will make a great addition to the Sixth Circuit, and I am proud to support his nomination. I would encourage all Members of the Senate to support him as we advance his nomination today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday former CIA Director John Brennan testified in the House Intelligence Committee that he had growing concerns about Russian interference in the final months of the 2016 election, adding that an investigation into potential collusion between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin was well founded. He issued very strong words.

Coming from a very careful civil servant from the intelligence community, Mr. Brennan's testimony should further compel Congress and the special counsel to pursue the full truth. What Mr. Brennan said was happening gets at the very core of our democracy, the free and fair election of our representatives. Americans of all political stripes should be outraged by what Putin and the Russians did during the 2016 elections. As former Director Brennan said, in America, ''we cherish the ability to elect our own leaders without outside interference or disruption.''

So, again, I expect that the Senate Intelligence Committee will continue its bipartisan investigation into these events. I expect that Special Counsel Mueller will help us all get to the bottom of this. We must make sure he is not interfered with.

Finally, I expect this body will hold up a high standard for the next FBI Director. He or she should be someone who is nonpartisan and independent, a Director's Director, a prosecutor's prosecutor, not a politician of either party.

Amidst all of the furor, we cannot lose sight of the most serious part of

this investigation: the scope of Russian interference in our elections and whether they colluded with representatives of an American campaign in the process. That is very serious stuff—very serious. We must pursue that investigation with vigor no matter who might stand in the way of it.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the budget, yesterday morning the Trump administration released their 2018 budget. The document is stunning in its cruelty. It takes a sledgehammer to the middle class, the working poor, while lavishing tax breaks on the very wealthy.

They may not have intended it, but the Trump budget is a compilation of all the broken promises this President made to working Americans. In his budget, President Trump has broken promise after promise after promise to working people without any shame, without any remorse, without any explanation.

The President promised to increase infrastructure investment, but his budget actually cuts more money from infrastructure programs than the new money it puts in. The President's proposal to slash American infrastructure investments is a job-killing 180-degree turn away from his repeated promise of a $1 trillion infrastructure plan.

President Trump's campaign promises on infrastructure are crumbling faster than our roads and bridges. I want to ask the Trump administration: How can we expect that you are going to be real about a trillion-dollar infrastructure plan when your budget cuts infrastructure dramatically—right now? Don't you think it adds up? To us, it does. It makes us very dubious of any attempt to do infrastructure by this administration. We hope we are wrong, but the budget is a document that tells where the real truth is in terms of administration beliefs. They sure as heck, by this budget, don't like infrastructure.

The President has said that education is the civil rights issue of our time, but the Trump budget calls for over $3.2 billion in cuts to higher education, eliminates programs that forgive loans for public service jobs like teachers and doctors, and eliminates subsidized loan programs that help lower the cost of college. College students of America, look at the President's budget and see if he is on your side. He sure as heck isn't.

The President said he would ''save Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid without cuts. Have to do it.'' Those are his words. But the Trump budget slashes Social Security by $72 billion and cuts Medicaid by hundreds of billions, in addition to the more than $800 billion TrumpCare cuts took from Medicaid already in the House bill. All in all, it is a $1 trillion broken promise on Medicaid.

Remember, America, Medicaid is a program that affects the poor. That is a good thing. But much of the money goes to help the middle class, elderly people in nursing homes, and families fighting opioid addiction. So the bottom line is this is another broken promise to the middle class that Trump made in the campaign.

The budget breaks promise after promise after promise the President made to what he called the forgotten America, the working men and women of America. Well, this budget forgot the forgotten American.

In addition, the Trump budget depends on fantasy math to make all the numbers work. Most budgets make assumptions, and they all stretch the math a little bit, but the Trump budget takes a quantum leap into a new dimension of budgetary fairy tale.

Not only does the Trump budget assume unrealistic growth as a way to balance the budget in 10 years—no economist, liberal or conservative, thinks we can achieve 3 percent growth in the near term—but the Trump budget double counts and double dips in a way we have never seen in any budget before. The Trump budget includes the assumption they will pass ''deficit-neutral tax reform.'' In order for their massive tax cut to be deficit-neutral, they need to assume the economy grows fast enough to make up for lost revenues. But at the same time, the Trump budget assumes that growth will pay for tax cuts and help pay down the deficit—both.

Take the estate tax as an example. President Trump has proposed eliminating the estate tax in tax reform. Yet the Trump budget assumes that the government will take in more than $300 billion in estate taxes over the next 10 years. In other words, part of the budget says that we are getting rid of the estate tax, and part of the budget says that $300 billion the estate tax brings in is counted toward balancing the budget. I have never seen anything like it. If an accountant did this, my guess is—I don't know accounting standards in detail—they would be kicked out of the accounting profession.

In short, as Benjamin Applebaum in the New York Times points out: ''President Trump is proposing to balance the federal budget in part by simultaneously increasing estate taxation and eliminating estate taxation.''

Let me read that again. This is a reporter for the New York Times, not some politician of a political party: ''President Trump is proposing to balance the federal budget in part by simultaneously increasing estate taxation and eliminating estate taxation.''

The gall, the nerve, and the facts-be-darned attitude in this budget are appalling. What they said on the estate tax is a complete contradiction. The government cannot take in money from a tax that no longer exists. Where are our fiscal watchdogs on the other side of the aisle when they do stuff like this?

Everyone knows Presidential budgets contain some degree of flexibility, but what the Trump budget does is a quantum leap that would make an accountant blush, if they could stay in their profession after doing this. The budget is a total fantasy, a deeply unserious proposal to Congress. Members of both parties are right to reject it, and I applaud many of my Republican colleagues for speaking out against this proposal.

Again, what will happen—my guess—is that Democrats and Republicans will ignore the Trump budget because it is so harsh on the middle class and because it is such an accounting nightmare. We will do our own budget, and we will probably produce something pretty good for the American people, as we did in 2017—as long as Donald Trump and the White House stay out of it.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, a word on healthcare: The Republican attempts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, combined with the Trump administration's refusal to commit to making key cost-sharing payments that help keep healthcare costs low for working Americans, have created great uncertainty in our healthcare system. This uncertainty has already caused insurers to flee the marketplace or propose rate increases for next year.

A spokesman for America's Health Insurance plans—that is the insurance industry's main group; again, it is not a politician—said:

> We need swift action and long-term certainty [on the cost-sharing program]. It is the single most destabilizing factor in the individual market, and millions of Americans could soon feel the impact of fewer choices, higher costs and reduced access to care.

My Republican colleagues, remember, if you continue to allow the President to do this, if we don't make cost sharing permanent, the system will deteriorate, and guess whose back it will be on? Yours, my Republican friends. You are in charge. And when people get a bad healthcare bill, you can blame anyone you want. You are in charge. Fix it.

Refusing to guarantee the cost-sharing payment is nothing short of sabotage, and the repeated attempts to pass TrumpCare will only make things worse.

The White House ought to step up and say once and for all that they will continue to make the cost-sharing payments permanently, and Republicans in Congress ought to drop their repeal efforts and, instead, work with us on stabilizing the market and improving our healthcare system.

Now, today the Congressional Budget Office will release its analysis of the House Republican healthcare bill—TrumpCare. I remind my colleagues how unusual it is for a CBO score to come out nearly 3 weeks after a bill has passed. It is like test driving a brand new car 3 weeks after you have

already signed on the dotted line and paid the dealer in full.

Republicans in the House were so worried about how bad the CBO score might be, they rushed TrumpCare through—no hearings, no debate, no score. Never mind that this legislation remakes one-sixth of our Nation's economy. It has life-and-death consequences for millions of American families.

Republicans were haunted by the ghost of CBO scores past, so they went ahead without one.

When the CBO analyzed the first version of TrumpCare earlier this year, it concluded that 24 million fewer Americans would have health insurance if it became law. We also learned the bill would gut Medicaid, crush seniors with higher premiums, and would increase out-of-pocket expenses for Americans of all ages with higher deductibles and copays.

Given that there were few differences between the first and second versions of TrumpCare, we can expect that today's CBO analysis will likely show many of the same grave consequences as the first one. Only now, of course, TrumpCare includes a new amendment that allows States to opt out of the requirement to cover people with preexisting conditions. It is hard to imagine such an amendment would make CBO's score any better than the last, and it could certainly raise a lot of new questions.

Does the deal the Freedom Caucus got with the second version of TrumpCare violate the rules of reconciliation? Will the House have to change the bill and take yet another vote on TrumpCare? We know they don't want to do that.

We also don't know the answer to these questions, and we may not know the answers even after seeing today's CBO analysis. But all of these open questions demonstrate how reckless it was for Republicans to vote on this bill without properly vetting it first.

I yield the floor to my good friend, the senior Senator from Vermont, the former and hopefully future Senate President pro tempore.

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 Sullivan nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday, we received President Trump's first budget submission. He calls it ''A New Foundation for American Greatness.'' Well, that might get an award for fiction, but it couldn't be further from the truth.

Instead of building a foundation for the American people, it pulls the rug out from under them. This budget has to be understood as something more than just a photo op with a slogan.

The President's budget displays a fundamental lack of understanding of the role of government of, by, and for the people in supporting the middle class, lifting up the most vulnerable among us and serving our values and interests as a Nation. It proposes to cut nondefense discretionary spending by over $1.5 trillion; that is, $1,500,000,000 over 10 years, including a $54 billion cut in fiscal year 2018 and a $260 billion cut by 2027. This would be a 40-percent cut to nondefense programs in 10 years.

This is not only shortsighted, it is irresponsible and unrealistic. We should be supporting opportunity, and we should be creating jobs, not eliminating them. What this country needs is jobs. We should be caring for our veterans. We should promote our health and the environment. These are important to all people. It doesn't make any difference what political party you belong to. We shouldn't be recklessly slashing vital lifelines to the American people.

Sequestration has had devastating consequences for both defense and nondefense programs. These consequences are going to last a generation. The Trump budget would only extend and deepen those problems.

We are nearing the Memorial Day break, and I ask Members of both sides of the aisle: Let's sit down, and let's have Republicans and Democrats work together, as the Senate is supposed to, and negotiate a budget deal based on parity. We did this in 2013; we did it in 2015. It worked well. Such a deal would allow the Senate to provide appropriations bills that reflect our true, enduring values as a nation.

The Trump budget proposes over $1.7 trillion in cruel and unsustainable cuts to important mandatory programs that provide a safety net of health and nutrition programs to those who are struggling most in our communities. Can you imagine, in the wealthiest, most powerful Nation on Earth, we are going to cut out programs to help the people most in need?

Many of the cuts in the Trump budget come from the Medicaid Program, where the President doubles down on the dangerous programmatic changes and cuts included in the TrumpCare bill. Not only would enacting this budget make it harder for low-income families to receive health coverage through Medicaid, but the proposal also cuts nearly $6 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program, which would force near-poverty children off health insurance.

I know in my own State of Vermont—it is not a wealthy State; it is a small State. But when we started a program to make sure children had healthcare, it was costly at first. In the long run, it saved us all a great deal of money. We were rated every year as the first or second healthiest State in the Nation. You have to have people healthy from the time they are children. You cannot suddenly say: Oh, we are going to spend a fortune when you are adults on illnesses that could have been taken care of when you were children.

The President's budget proposes significant cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which supports food assistance for individuals and families in need. How does the President expect to make America great again if there are hungry children in our schools? Every parent knows a hungry child cannot learn. How can we be the greatest country in the world if we do not offer a helping hand to the most vulnerable among us?

It has been and continues to be my goal that we complete the appropriations process in the Senate the way it is supposed to be done. Each of the 12 appropriations bills deserves debate and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. All Republicans and Democrats vote for the things they support and vote against the things they oppose. That is in the best interest of this country, and I know Chairman COCHRAN shares this goal. As vice chairman, I will work with him to do this.

This budget is an obstacle and not a pathway to this goal. The President's budget proposal is not bipartisan. In fact, I am willing to bet that, if you put the President's budget on the floor today and asked for a vote up or down, even though the Republicans are in the majority in the Senate, it would not pass because it does not make a hint of a gesture toward true bipartisanship. The appropriations process works best when you have bipartisan cooperation. This budget is not in the best interest of the country or of the real priorities of the American people. That is why it would not get even enough Republican votes to pass. It is unbalanced, needlessly provocative, and appallingly shortsighted.

Rural America, including rural States like Vermont, is missing in action in the President's budget. His

budget eliminates key investments in rural communities and leaves them without Federal partnership support for everything from infrastructure development and affordable housing to programs that preserve the environment and provide food for the elderly.

It is a compilation of broken promises to working men and women and struggling families, and it frays the lifelines that help vulnerable families lift themselves into the middle class. This Vermonter does not find that acceptable, and I doubt others do.

Eliminating the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which we call LIHEAP, would leave thousands of Vermonters and thousands throughout this country out in the cold. The government should not be in the business of saying to families: OK, you have a choice. It is 10 degrees outside. You can either have heat, or you can eat. You can either have enough warmth so that you do not freeze to death, or you can have food so that you do not starve to death, but you cannot have both.

We are the most powerful, wealthy Nation on Earth. What a choice to force on people.

From LIHEAP, in my own State, Vermont received nearly $19 million to help more than 21,000 households in all 14 counties last year. This is a vital lifeline, and it is especially important in rural communities. We cannot slash investments in our rural communities.

We cannot abandon Federal support for cleaning up Lake Champlain. Eliminating the Sea Grant and Geographic programs would be foolish, as it would waste the investments we have already made. It would mean that the money we have put in to clean our lake would end up being lost, and we would have to start all over again.

The large and dynamic ecosystem in Lake Champlain is the largest body of freshwater in the United States outside of the Great Lakes. It borders Vermont, New York, and Canada and is a treasure, but we cannot stand still. We do not want it to become polluted like other bodies of water throughout our country. You either advance or you slip behind, and once you start slipping behind, it becomes an escalating matter.

The budget is full of cuts that advance the administration's antiscience, know-nothing-ism agenda. It eliminates thousands of scientists and shuts off funding for research into cures for everything from Alzheimer's to cancer. You cannot say to people who are trying to find a cure for cancer and so many other diseases: Oh, we are going to cut your money for a few years, turn everything off, send the scientists home, and maybe in a few years we might give you money again.

You cannot do that with medical research. The University of Vermont would lose millions of dollars for valuable research—research that you cannot pause and hope to resume. We are so close to finding a cure for most kinds of cancer, just as we did years ago with polio. Are we going to turn that off? Are we going to say to the American people: We want to have a sloganeering budget. Sorry. When your grandchildren come along, maybe someday, somebody will restore this science and will find a cure for cancer.

This budget not only denies the reality of climate change, but it eliminates all of the Environmental Protection Agency's climate programs, from voluntary incentives to programs that seek to prevent further damage to public health and environmental quality. Climate change is very real, and we are at a critical moment. Now is not the time to turn back the progress we have been making.

The President has promised jobs, jobs, jobs. I would love to see jobs, jobs, jobs in this country, but under his budget, an estimated 4 million people, including veterans, would lose access to employment and training services next year. Four million Americans would lose that promise of a job. He would eliminate almost $4 billion from Pell grants. You do not create jobs by denying young people access to affordable higher education or by slashing job training.

Cutting the State Department's budget by more than 30 percent shows a clear lack of understanding of the vital role of soft power in our national security. The Secretary of Defense said: If you are going to cut the State Department's budget this way, you had better give me money to buy more bullets, because I am going to need them.

The budget would eliminate lifesaving nutrition programs. It would impede our ability to promote stability in increasingly volatile regions of the world. America is not made safer by failing to feed the hungry.

As Defense Secretary Mattis has said, soft power is fundamental to our national security, which has been said by Secretaries of Defense and military leaders in both Republican and Democratic administrations.

The Trump budget would have serious and harmful consequences for our economy, for working families, for those who are struggling, for our environment, for health, for the seed corn of cutting-edge scientific and technological research, and for our national security. This is foolish, and it is not acceptable. You do not turn these things on and off to make a sound bite. Sound bites do not make America strong, and sound bites do not continue the greatness of America. Tough choices keep America great and help the American people.

I would remind the White House that the power of the purse rests with Congress. As vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I intend to exercise that power, and I will work with Chairman COCHRAN in laying out a bipartisan path forward.

Mr. President, there are far too many illogical, arbitrary, and harmful cuts in spending and wholly unbalanced priorities in the President's proposed fiscal year 2018 budget to list at one time. I will have plenty more to say about that in the weeks and months ahead, but I do want to take a moment to highlight one, as it illustrates the foolhardy way this Administration has sought to appease right-wing ideologues rather than do what is truly in the national interest.

For fiscal year 2017, the Congress—Republicans and Democrats—agreed to appropriate $607.5 million for international family planning programs. Under our law, none of those funds can be used for abortion. They are for contraceptives and services like education and counseling to promote voluntary family planning in the world's poorest countries and, by doing so, to reduce reliance on abortion, reduce child mortality, improve maternal and child health, and increase opportunities for women and girls.

These programs have a long track record. There is abundant, indisputable data to show they are effective and they save lives, and they illustrate that, while we may have fundamental differences about whether women should have the right to abortion, there is broad agreement about the importance of family planning.

For fiscal year 2018, the Trump Administration proposes to eliminate funding for international family planning as a way to ''protect life.'' That may be an appealing sound bite, but that's all it is. For every $10 million reduction in funding for family planning and reproductive health programs, the data shows that approximately 440,000 fewer women and couples receive contraceptive services and supplies, resulting in 95,000 additional unintended pregnancies, including 44,000 more unplanned births, 38,000 more abortions, and 200 more pregnancy-related deaths.

How does that protect life? The evidence is overwhelming that the absence of family planning not only means more unsafe abortions but higher birth rates, 95 percent of which occur in the poorest countries that cannot feed or provide jobs for their people today.

I would say to the ideologues in the White House who think that the way to protect life is to cut off funding for family planning: They don't know what they are talking about. These are the same people who support vastly expanding the Mexico City Policy beyond President Ronald Reagan and both President George H.W. Bush and President George W. Bush, to all global health funding. In fact, they will be responsible for more abortions, higher rates of child mortality, higher rates of maternal death, and greater suffering.

This is a shocking proposal. They either don't realize how much harm and suffering it would cause, or they don't care. Can you imagine if our government, in addition to trying to outlaw abortion, tried to take away the contraceptives Americans rely on to prevent unwanted pregnancies? Tens of millions of Americans depend on access

to modern family planning services every day. The outcry would be immediate, and it would be deafening.

I am confident that the Congress will reject this unwise and cruel proposal. It would be unconstitutional in this country, and it should not be imposed on millions of impoverished people in the developing countries who depend on our assistance.

I would note the importance of it. We had a man whom I admired greatly in this body, a Republican chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Mark Hatfield. He was strongly anti-abortion but was an honest and good man who said that we had to have these family planning programs because without them, the number of abortions would skyrocket, that the number of deaths at birth would skyrocket, and that we would have higher birth rates, 95 percent of which would occur in the poorest countries that could not feed or provide jobs for their people.

Let's not do that again. Let's not make policy by sound bite. Let's make policy as to what is best for our country and that best respects the values of America—values that we have tried to demonstrate throughout the world. We also try to demonstrate that to our own country no matter where you are, whether you are Republican or Democrat or Independent, whether you are poor or rich, rural or urban. Let's work on what is the best for America, not on a budget that tries to polarize America and pits one group against another.

Mr. President, on this table I have on the floor, I note that it shows how we, at the Pentagon, have money to put into a border wall at the cost of the Department of Agriculture, clean energy, climate change, the environment, education, foreign aid, infrastructure, healthcare, the middle class, civil rights, labor unions, nutrition programs, child nutrition, and community investments. If we want to spend $40 billion on a wall that will make no sense and have the taxpayers pay for it—easy—let's vote it up or down. I do not think the American people want it. They would rather see that money be spent on programs that educate people, that create jobs, that improve science and find cures for cancer and others, not for a wall that we will pay for and that nobody else will pay for.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Sullivan nomination expire at 3 p.m. today and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise to discuss problems that affect almost every aspect of our everyday life no matter who we are, where we live, our level of income, or any other distinction that might be possible to make. These problems have to do with America's surface transportation system.

Like most Nebraskans, I believe infrastructure is a core duty of the Federal Government. It represents investment in our economy, public safety, and national security. In the Senate, much of my work has been focused on removing unnecessary obstacles to the flow of goods, materials, and, most importantly, people along our Nation's surface transportation networks. Through legislation and with Executive orders, we did lower the coefficient of friction on these systems. We can lower that enough that people and products can get where they need to go quicker and at a lower cost. I have been proud to support several pieces of legislation to do just that.

In 2015, Congress passed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act—the FAST Act. It was our first long-term highway bill in more than a decade. As chairman of the Surface Transportation Subcommittee in the Senate, I was glad to help steer it to final passage.

I am also proud to have authored a significant number of its provisions. For example, the bill includes a new national strategic freight program that provides every State with annual guaranteed funding. Because of the freight program, States will have greater flexibility to work with key stakeholders and local officials to develop strategic investments in transportation. The program funnels transportation funds to States and allows them to decide on their terms how to use it. By dedicating funding for rural and urban freight corridors, the program enhances the flow of commercial traffic, and it increases safety on our Nation's roads.

The true beauty of this program is that it offers States the opportunity to make critical investments to best meet their specific geographic and their specific infrastructure needs. Nebraska can elect to invest in a rail grade crossing or a truck parking lot along a rural road. California could choose to invest in ondock rail projects at our Nation's largest port complex located just outside of Los Angeles. It works for all States without leaving any behind.

The FAST Act was an important first step, but there is more to be done. President Trump has spoken frequently about the need to invest in our transportation infrastructure. Just yesterday, the administration released a set of principles for reexamining how we do that. I am encouraged to see these proposals that will give States greater flexibility to develop our infrastructure as well as reduce unnecessary regulations that delay these very important projects.

The proposal also talks about providing long-term solutions, which is something I have long supported. This is critical for States to develop, construct, and maintain infrastructure. Last week, at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing, we heard an update from Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. She committed to working closely with Congress as we continue to develop commonsense solutions for our infrastructure needs. She outlined some of the proposals the Department of Transportation is reviewing to include in this infrastructure package. During that hearing—the Presiding Officer was there as well—the Secretary told me she is committed to working closely with my colleagues and me to develop a national infrastructure policy.

I also brought up the issue of delays due to burdensome regulations like the National Environmental Policy Act permitting process that directly affects Nebraska projects. To address these delays, the Nebraska Unicameral unanimously passed legislation that would allow the Nebraska Department of Roads to assume the NEPA permitting process. NDOR has sent a letter to the Federal Highway Administration to begin the implementation of this program, and that could take up to 18 months to complete.

I asked the Secretary for an update on the progress of the application, and she assured me the Department is following it closely. She said: ''We know the issue, we are tracking it, and we will continue to pay attention.'' Furthermore, Secretary Chao explained that the administration ''will not specify any list of projects'' in an infrastructure plan. States know their transportation needs best, not the Federal Government. The larger the role States have from start to finish in developing their own infrastructure, the more they can direct funding to the projects that directly affect their citizens.

For the benefit of families across America in both our urban and our rural areas, we need to look for out-of-the-box solutions to ensure that our infrastructure is up to date. That is why I have introduced the Build USA Infrastructure Act, which looks to solve two major challenges to our transportation

system. The first is the near-term solvency of the highway trust fund's expiration of the FAST Act in 2020. The second is a lack of flexibility for States in starting and finishing major transportation infrastructure projects.

According to the March 2016 Congressional Budget Office projections, by the year 2026, the highway trust fund will face a cumulative shortfall of approximately $107 billion. Meanwhile, we see construction costs climbing. The rise in the use of electric and alternative-fuel vehicles is causing trust fund revenues to fall. Heavy Federal regulations continue to eat away at that purchasing power of the highway trust fund.

America needs a new plan to successfully meet the looming highway trust fund shortfall and to strengthen our transportation system. The Build USA Infrastructure Act gives us a plan.

For 5 years following the expiration of the FAST Act, this legislation would direct the U.S. Treasury to dedicate approximately $21.4 billion in Customs and Border Patrol-collected fees and revenues to the highway trust fund. Now, CBP revenue collections on freight, cargo, and passengers include tariffs, duties, taxes, and user fees at U.S. land, water, and air ports of entry. CBP revenues from these sources amounted to nearly $46 billion in fiscal year 2015. Because of their nature as charges on freight and travelers, Customs duties and fees closely abide by the ''user pays'' principle that we look at in transportation funding. According to CBP, the agency only utilizes $2 billion of that revenue for its operations, so the diversion of revenue would not negatively impact CBP's operating budget. By using an existing revenue stream which has a transportation nexus, we provide stability to the highway trust fund without increasing fees or taxes, and that is sound policy.

The Build USA Infrastructure Act also offers greater flexibility to States so their limited highway dollars can go further for them. I served 8 years in the Nebraska Legislature. I know our States, counties, and cities face real challenges in starting and completing infrastructure projects because of excessive procedural costs, delays, and really an overall lack of transportation funding. According to the Congressional Research Service, major Federal highway projects can take as long as 14 years to complete from start to finish. It took less time to build the Panama Canal, and we did that more than a century ago.

Greater flexibility, improved collaboration, and more autonomy can help States begin and complete their vital infrastructure projects in less time, which means lower costs. The Build USA Infrastructure Act would let them do that through State remittance agreements. This legislation would offer States more flexibility and control of infrastructure funding by establishing a new partnership between them and the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. Under this arrangement, States are permitted to enter into voluntary remittance agreements whereby they can remit 10 percent of their Federal aid highway dollars in exchange for State purview over design, permitting, and construction aspects of Federal aid highway projects. The State-remitted money to the Federal Highway Administration would be deposited into the highway trust fund to help further address its growing deficit. It would give States breathing room as they work to bring in projects on time and on budget.

I am so confident in this bill because I have seen these concepts work at the State level. As a State senator in the Nebraska Legislature, I introduced the Build Nebraska Act. It directed a quarter of each cent of sales tax revenue toward maintaining Nebraska's roads and bridges. Because of it, more than $1 billion will be available to meet Nebraska's infrastructure needs over the next 17 years.

I also introduced legislation that tasked the Nebraska Department of Roads with developing the Federal Funds Purchase Program. In exchange for giving up a portion of Federal transportation dollars, Nebraska counties and their towns can now receive funds with more reasonable regulatory requirements. Because of this program, major Nebraska transportation projects, such as the longstanding bridge replacement in Buffalo County and a major arterial street in South Sioux City, are up and running.

Investing in infrastructure means so much more than just adding a few lines to a map. It means connecting our families and delivering goods and services. In Nebraska's case, it means feeding the world. With persistence and prudent planning, we can build for the future, we can give greater economic opportunity to rising generations, and we can connect communities—family to family, town to town, and coast to coast.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am happy to announce that soon I will be introducing legislation that reauthorizes several critical provisions to help fight human trafficking and bring us one step closer to ridding our country of this heinous crime.

The Abolish Human Trafficking Act is chiefly a bill about getting human trafficking victims the help they need by focusing on ways to support them as they rebuild their lives. To me, one of the most shocking things about this terrible crime that victims of human trafficking need most is a safe place to live because without that, they will not be able to escape the people who have enslaved them, nor will they be able to begin the steps of the long road to recovery.

This legislation reauthorizes the Justice Department's Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund, which we established when we passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, a bill I authored that was signed into law last Congress. This fund—like a crime victims compensation fund—provides critical resources to help victims get the services they need to recover.

Part of the fund is financed through fines collected on convicted traffickers. It is a clear way we can use these fines to do some good. Last year, the fund provided almost $5 million in victims services. By reauthorizing it, it can continue to serve more victims.

The bill also empowers victims by permanently reauthorizing the Human Trafficking Advisory Council—a group of survivors who annually advise the government on ways to combat this crime and lend a hand.

This bill goes a long way to help victims who should be at the forefront of any of our conversations about human trafficking. There is also no question that our Nation's law enforcement officials need more support to track down the perpetrators of this crime and bring them to justice. Certainly, law enforcement needs more training to better equip them to serve victims too. This bill also does that.

It requires the Department of Homeland Security to implement screening protocols across law enforcement anti-trafficking task forces. One of the hardest things about human trafficking may be, in fact, being able to identify that it is occurring when it occurs right in front of your eyes.

This training will impact the work of law enforcement at the Federal, State, and local levels. That way, law enforcement at every level of government can learn how to better spot trafficking victims and will have the adequate training to connect victims to the services they need in order to recover.

The legislation will also direct the Department of Health and Human Services to continue a pilot program to train healthcare providers about human trafficking. Healthcare providers, after all, are likely to come in contact with human trafficking victims as well, and they need to know the telltale signs that will alert them so they can report this to the appropriate authorities.

I have noted before that so much of the battle is about educating professionals but not just professionals. I would say all of us as ordinary citizens need to be on the lookout for signs of human trafficking.

Sadly, I learned a few years ago, when the Super Bowl was held in Texas, that one of the premier trafficking events in the Nation each year

is the Super Bowl, sad and as tragic as that sounds.

There is a role for all of us to play as regular citizens in identifying the telltale signs of human trafficking, and then when we see something wrong, to say something about it so hopefully they can be investigated.

Through pilot programs like this one, my hope is that more people will better understand it. The more people who understand trafficking and its warning signs, the more we can do to help those trapped in this modern-day slavery.

The legislation will also give law enforcement more resources to target criminal street gangs who profit from human trafficking. They view human beings as just another commodity that they can make money from, and going after criminal street gangs who profit from human trafficking is really important. We would also enhance the penalties for several human trafficking-related offenses as well.

Finally, the Abolish Human Trafficking Act will improve and update the national strategy to fight human trafficking across the country by requiring the Department of Justice to add a demand reduction component. This will build on legislation passed in the last Senate by a vote of 99 to 0, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

I know by reading the newspaper and watching TV, people think nothing happens in Washington that is truly nonpartisan or bipartisan in nature. This is an example of why that is wrong. Certainly, this is a cause that every Member of the Senate can get behind, and there is no reason we shouldn't be able to pass this legislation soon with similar strong bipartisan, literally overwhelming bipartisan support.

I am grateful to our friend and the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Chairman GRASSLEY, for his focus on doing all we can for victims of human trafficking. In addition to his support for the Abolish Human Trafficking Act, I know he also plans to introduce complementary anti-trafficking legislation, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

I am hopeful both bills will be considered soon so we can prove the Senate is united in our opposition to human trafficking and so we can lend more support to the victims who so desperately need it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, here is the scorecard on 557 Presidential nominations during the first 100 days of the Trump administration, through April 29. According to the Partnership for Public Service, in collaboration with the Washington Post, on Cabinet appointments, President Trump did his job, but Senate Democrats did not do their job. The President announced all of his Cabinet nominations before he was inaugurated on January 20, but Democrats delayed confirmation of Cabinet nominations more than those of any other recent President. On sub-Cabinet appointments, President Trump did not do his job. He was slower than any other recent President to send his nominations to the Senate.

So here is what could happen. If Democrats continue their delaying tactics, when President Trump does send sub-Cabinet nominees to the Senate, the President would have every excuse to stop nominating and simply appoint acting officials to about 350 of the remaining key positions.

An administration managed by acting Presidential appointees who have not been confirmed by the Senate would be a first in American history. Delaying the inevitable approval of nominations of a President you oppose might sound to your political base like good politics, but it would be supremely bad governing. Senate Democrats would actually diminish their influence and shoot themselves in both feet. They would be turning over to a President they don't like an excuse to staff the government with about 350 key appointees who are unconfirmed and unaccountable to the Senate. Now, this 350 number does not even include the Ambassadors in embassies all around the world, where there may be acting heads of the embassy.

Now, what difference would it make to have an administration mostly unexamined and unconfirmed by the Senate? Well, it would mean that the Senate would be giving the Executive more power at the expense of the legislative branch.

This undermines the checks and balances created by our Nation's Founders. Democrats complained that Republicans delayed some of President Obama's nominees, and that is true. In fact, that has always been true. My own nomination for U.S. Education Secretary in 1991 was delayed for 2 months by a Democratic Senator who put a hold on my nomination for unexplained reasons.

President Ford's nomination of Warren Rudman to the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1976 was blocked by Democratic New Hampshire Senator John Durkin.

The rest of the story is that Rudman eventually asked President Ford to withdraw the nomination, ran against Durkin, and defeated him in the next election. That is how Warren Rudman got to be a U.S. Senator. There is a better way to resolve differences between Senators and the President.

In December of 2015, President Obama seemed content to allow John King of New York to serve as his Acting Secretary of Education for the last year of President Obama's term. I told the President I thought it was inappropriate for a President to have an acting Cabinet member for so long and that, while I disagreed with Mr. King on many points, I urged him to nominate King and, if he did, I promised that I would hold a prompt hearing and see to it that he was confirmed.

President Obama nominated John King on February 11, 2016. John King was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on March 14, 2016. I disagreed with Secretary King often, but the Secretary was confirmed. He was confirmed by and accountable to the U.S. Senate, as he should have been and as our Constitution envisions.

All of President Trump's Cabinet nominees are now confirmed, but this is how long it took compared with his three immediate predecessors: All of President Trump's nominations were announced before his inauguration, but the Senate confirmed only two of those nominations on day one because Senate Democrats would not agree to any more than that. A third Cabinet nominee was confirmed on January 31st. To compare, by January 31st in prior administrations, President Obama had 10 nominees confirmed, and George W. Bush and Bill Clinton each had 13 confirmed.

Please keep in mind that it is impossible for Democratic Senators by themselves to defeat a Trump nominee. Confirmation requires only a majority voting to be present; that is usually 51 Senators. There are 52 Republican Senators and, in addition, Vice President PENCE can vote in the case of a tie. There is no 60-vote filibuster available to block nominees because Democrats, when they were in the majority in 2013, changed Senate rules to eliminate the filibuster on nominations. So by their obstruction, Democrats are only delaying the inevitable, using various tactics to require the Senate to use nearly a week of floor time to approve even noncontroversial nominees.

We don't know how Democrats will treat President Trump's more than 350 remaining key nominees because the President has made so few of those. For example, I am chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Aside from the Cabinet secretaries who come to our committee, of the 557 key positions identified by the Washington Post, 35 of them within the Cabinet agencies require recommendations to the full Senate by the HELP committee. In the Department of Health and Human Services, we have eight. In the Department of Education, we have 14. In the Department of Labor, we have 13.

At the end of the first 100 days, April 29th, our committee had received just one sub-Cabinet nomination from the Trump administration—that of Dr. Scott Gottlieb for FDA commissioner. He was promptly confirmed on May 9th.

Compared with President Trump's one sub-Cabinet nomination sent to our committee in his first 100 days, President Obama made 13 sub-Cabinet nominations in his first 100 days, President George W. Bush made 10, and President Clinton made 14 to our committee.

There are actually nearly 700 more Presidential nominees requiring Senate confirmation who aren't considered key by the Washington Post analysis, so you can see this adds up to be a pretty big number of Presidential nominees whom we have a responsibility to consider and to confirm if we approve them.

Unfortunately, there are ominous signs about how Democrats will treat non-Cabinet nominees. As the Presiding Officer is especially aware, Democrats required the Senate to take nearly a week of floor time to consider the nomination of Iowa Governor Terry Branstad to serve as Ambassador to China. There was absolutely no excuse for this other than obstructionism.

Governor Branstad is the longest serving Governor in American history. He has a well-documented relationship with the Chinese President. He was one of the first appointees that the President announced. He was approved by a voice vote by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and ultimately approved by the full Senate earlier this week 82 to 13.

Yet, as a delaying tactic, Senate Democrats forced us to use nearly a week of our floor time to consider Governor Branstad. If Democrats treat other noncontroversial Ambassadors and sub-Cabinet members the same way they treated Governor Branstad, requiring nearly a week of Senate floor time to consider a nominee, then I think President Trump would almost certainly bypass the Senate and name hundreds of acting heads of sub-Cabinet departments. Under our Constitution, he may do that whenever he chooses. There are flexible limits on the time one may serve in an acting position, but if that time expires, the President can simply appoint someone else.

Hopefully, President Trump will speed up his nomination of sub-Cabinet members, and hopefully Democrats will return to the common practice of routine floor approval of Presidential nominations when the confirmation process has determined that the nominee deserves to be approved.

Our Founders created a system of government based on checks and balances of the three coequal branches of government. There has been much complaining recently about the rise of the executive branch at the expense of the legislative branch. Having an executive branch and embassies mostly staffed by acting personnel not confirmed by or accountable to the U.S. Senate undermines the principle of three coequal branches of government.

The President should want his team in place and should speed up recommending key nominees to the U.S. Senate. And Senators, especially those in the minority, should want to have a say in the vetting and accountability that come with the Senate confirmation process.

FRED D. THOMPSON FEDERAL BUILDING AND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 375, which was received from the House.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 375) to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse.''

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 375) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I am grateful that the Senate has approved that measure naming the Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse in Nashville.

I stand at the desk of former Senator Thompson. This was a desk that Senator Howard Baker also had. I have the desk myself because Senator Thompson and I were inspired by Senator Baker to be involved in politics and government in our State and the House of Representatives—our delegation.

I think Senator CARPER and his committee all seem to think that it is very appropriate that the new Nashville courthouse be named for Senator Thompson. It gives me a great deal of pride and personal privilege to be able to ask for that to be done. I thank Congresswoman BLACKBURN in the House for her leadership and all the Members of the delegation and the Members of the Senate for their cooperation in this.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF COURTNEY ELWOOD

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, the Senate will shortly consider the nomination of Courtney Elwood to be the CIA's General Counsel. I wanted to take a few minutes this morning to discuss the nomination and put it in the context of the extraordinary national security challenges our country faces.

It is hard to imagine a more despicable act than the terrorist attack in Manchester Monday night, killing innocent teenagers and children who were out to enjoy a concert. The suffering that Americans and all in the Senate have been reading about and watching on television is heartbreaking by any standards. I think it is fair to say that, as Americans, we stand in strong solidarity with our British friends, our allies, as they confront this horror. Our country will, as we have for so many years, stand shoulder to shoulder with them as there is an effort to collect more information about this attack, about what actually happened, and work to prevent future attacks.

Not everything is known about the attack, but one thing Americans do know is that it can happen here. That is why, as I begin this discussion on this important nomination and the challenges in front of our country, I would like to start, as I invariably do when we talk about intelligence matters, by recognizing the extraordinary men and women who work in the intelligence community, who work tirelessly across the government to keep our people safe from terrorist attacks. So much of what they do is in secret, and that is appropriate. It is so important to keep secret what is called the sources and methods that our intelligence community personnel are using. It is important to the American people and it is important to our country to make sure that the people protecting them every day can do their jobs.

The reason I took this time this morning to talk about this nomination is to talk about the broader context of what we owe the American people, and I feel very strongly that we owe the American people security and liberty. The two are not mutually exclusive, and it is possible to protect the people of our country with smart policies that protect both their security and their liberty.

Smart policies ensure that security and liberty are not mutually exclusive. For example, I would cite as a smart policy something I was proud to have been involved in. Section 102 of the USA FREEDOM Act sought to make sure that we weren't just indiscriminately collecting millions of phone records on law-abiding people. A provision, section 102, says that when our government believes there is an emergency where the safety and security and well-being of the American people is at stake, our government can move immediately to deal with the problem and then come back later and settle up with respect to getting a warrant. That was something that, I thought, really solidified what was a smart policy.

Our Founding Fathers had a Fourth Amendment for a reason—to protect the liberties of our people. What we said is that we are going to be sensitive to those liberties, but at the same time, we are going to be sensitive to

the security and well-being of the American people at a dangerous time. We are going to say that, if the government believes there is an emergency, the government can go get that information immediately and come back later and settle up with the warrant process.

Issues ensuring that we have security and liberty are especially important today. We obviously face terrorism. We are challenged by Russia and North Korea, and the list can go on and on. The fact is, there are a host of these challenges, and it seems to me that if we look at the history of how to deal with a climate like this, too often there is almost a kind of easy, practically knee-jerk approach that is billed as dealing with a great security challenge that very often gives our people less security and less liberty. At a time when people want both, they end up getting less. That is what happens so often in crises, and far too often it happens in large part because senior lawyers operating in secret give the intelligence community the green light to conduct operations that are not in the country's interest.

I am going to walk through how misguided and dangerous decisions can be made and how much depends on how the lawyers interpret current law. In past debates people have said: You know, that happened years ago, many years ago, and various steps were taken to correct it. Today, I am going to talk about how misguided and dangerous decisions can be made today.

At the center of this question is the nominee to be the CIA general counsel and what I consider to be very troubling statements that have been made on a number of the key issues that involve decisions that will be made now. In outlining those, I want to explain why it is my intention to vote against the confirmation of Courtney Elwood to be the CIA's general counsel.

The key principle to begin with is that there is a clear distinction between keeping secrets of sources and methods used by the intelligence community, which is essential, and the creation of secret law, which is not. We in the Senate have a responsibility to make sure the public is not kept in the dark about the laws and rules that govern what the intelligence community can and cannot do.

I believe the American people understand that their government cannot always disclose who it is spying on, but they are fed up with having to read in the papers about the government secretly making up the rules. They were fed up when they learned about the illegal, warrantless wiretapping program. They were fed up when they learned about the bulk collection of phone records of millions of law-abiding Americans.

What our people want to know is that the rules are going to be, No. 1, clear to everybody and, No. 2, that the government is operating within those rules. That is why the nominations for the intelligence community are so important. The American people need to know how these men and women understand the laws that authorize what they can and cannot do in secret.

Shortly, the Senate will consider the nominee to be the CIA's general counsel. I believe there are few more important positions in government than this one, when it comes to interpreting key laws. The advice the general counsel provides to the Central Intelligence Agency will be shielded from the American people and possibly from Congress as well. There is almost never accountability before the public, the press, watchdog groups, or other public institutions that help preserve our democracy. There are almost never debates on the floor of the Senate about the legality of the CIA's operations. It is all in secret.

The advice of this general counsel will carry especially important heft, given what CIA Director Mike Pompeo said during his confirmation. Again and again during those confirmation hearings, when asked what boundaries Director Pompeo would draw around the government's surveillance authorities, the Director responded that he was bound by the law. In effect, the Director said to the Senate and this body that he would defer to the lawyers. So if Congress and the American people were to have any clue as to what the Central Intelligence Agency might do under Director Pompeo, we were going to have to ask the nominee to be general counsel. That is why it is critical that she answer questions about her views of the law and that she answer them now before a confirmation vote.

I asked those questions, and what I heard in return was either a troubling response or some combination of ''I don't know,'' and ''I will figure it out after I am confirmed.''

Now, without answers, we are left largely to judge Ms. Elwood by her record. So I am going to start by looking back at her previous service and what she says about it now.

With respect to the National Security Agency's illegal warrantless wiretapping, that became public at the end of 2005 when Ms. Elwood was at the Department of Justice. She reviewed public statements about the program and held discussions about those public statements with individuals inside and outside the administration. That includes discussions with the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel about the Department's legal analysis justifying the warrantless wiretapping program. She was especially involved when the Attorney General made public statements about the program. So the committee asked her about some of that Justice Department public analysis, and, in particular, the Department of Justice January 2006 white paper that was thought to justify the warrantless wiretapping program. Ms. Elwood responded that she thought at the time that the Department of Justice's analysis was ''thorough and carefully reasoned and that certain points were compelling.''

This was an illegal program. It violated the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. No interpretation of the law that defended that warrantless wiretapping program is carefully reasoned or compelling. It was an illegal program.

Ms. Elwood also said that some of the analysis ''presented a difficult question'' and that ''reasonable minds could reach different conclusions.'' Of course, the point is not what ''reasonable minds'' might conclude. The point for us in the Senate is what her mind would conclude. Remember, this is the Department of Justice's conclusion that the laws governing wiretapping of Americans inside the United States could be disregarded because the President says so or because the Department of Justice secretly reinterprets the law in a way that no American could recognize. Remember, too, that we are talking about a program that may have begun shortly after 9/11, but it was still going on secretly and without congressional oversight more than 4 years later when it was revealed in the press. That was the context in which the Department of Justice—at the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006, when Ms. Elwood was at the Department—determined that the warrantless wiretapping program was perfectly legal and constitutional.

This is—to say, in my view—at the least, dangerous, and it could happen again.

I wanted to give Ms. Elwood every opportunity to reconsider and distance herself from these assertions I described. So I asked very specific questions. First, did the Fourth Amendment warrant requirement apply? No, she responded. She endorsed the view that the warrantless wiretapping of Americans on American soil did not require warrants under the Fourth Amendment. That was not very encouraging.

What about the other arguments made to try to justify this illegal program?

The first was the notion that the 2001 authorization for use of military force somehow gave the government the green light to conduct warrantless wiretapping of Americans inside the United States. This argument was ludicrous. The authorization for use of military force said nothing about surveillance. The applicable law governing national security wiretapping was the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—period. If the Bush Administration had wanted the law to conduct warrantless wiretapping after 9/11, it could have asked the Congress to pass it as part of the PATRIOT Act. It didn't. So when they got caught and had to explain to the public what they had been doing all these years, they said that the authorization for use of military force, which the Congress understood as authorizing war in Afghanistan, somehow magically allowed for

wiretapping in the United States. The second argument was that the President had something called ''inherent power'' to disregard the law.

I asked Ms. Elwood if she agreed with either of these arguments. She wouldn't answer the question of whether the authorization for use of military force authorized warrantless wiretapping, and she wouldn't answer the question of whether the President's so-called inherent power authorized the warrantless wiretapping. That was not very encouraging, either.

I did get one answer. Ms. Elwood said that the arguments that the Bush Administration's secret interpretation of the authorization for use of military force, combined with the President's so-called inherent powers, allowed for the warrantless wiretapping, in her view, that ''seemed reasonable.'' That definitely was not encouraging.

Then it occurred to me that having asked her about the past in some of these concerns that I have just raised, I thought maybe that is all part of yesteryear. Maybe that is all in the past. Let bygones be bygones. So I looked for assurances that Ms. Elwood's defense of warrantless wiretapping wasn't relevant now. After all, Ms. Elwood's response to questions about the program referred to the law at the time. Maybe current law makes clear to everyone, including the nominee, that there will never again be warrantless wiretapping of Americans in the United States.

So what does the law actually say now? Back in 2008, Congress took a big part of the warrantless wiretapping program and turned it into the law now known as section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The Congress wanted to make it absolutely clear that our country had really turned the page and that Americans wouldn't have to worry about any more violations of the law. So the Congress included in the law a statement that said: We really mean it. This law is ''the exclusive means'' by which electronic surveillance could be conducted.

I asked Ms. Elwood about whether the President's supposed powers under the Constitution could trump the current statutory framework in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Specifically, I asked her whether that provision in law—the one passed in 2008 that explicitly states that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act is the exclusive means for conducting wiretapping—would keep the President from asserting some other constitutional authority in this area.

She said she had not studied the question. This was the most troubling answer of all because this is about how the law stands today. This is not talking about yesteryear. This is about how the law stands today, and this was the nominee to be general counsel to the Central Intelligence Agency's not ruling out another assertion of so-called inherent Presidential power to override the law.

My fear is that if the public cannot get reassuring answers now to these fundamental questions of law, then Americans could end up learning about the nominee's views when it is too late—when our people open up the newspapers someday and learn about an intelligence program that is based on a dangerous and secret interpretation of the law. It happened repeatedly in the past, and my message today is that the Senate cannot let it happen again.

One of the reasons Ms. Elwood's views on whether the government was obligated to respect the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act is so important is that, for the most part, the Central Intelligence Agency operates under authorities that are actually more vague than is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. In fact, those authorities are not even established in a statute that people in Iowa and Oregon could just go and read. The CIA's authorities to collect and use information on Americans and even to secretly participate in organizations in the United States are conducted under an Executive order, Executive Order No. 12333.

In January, during the last 2 weeks of the Obama administration, the intelligence community released two documents that offered a little bit of insight into how intelligence is collected and used under this Executive order. It was good that the Obama administration released the documents. More transparency is why I can come to the floor and be part of this conversation.

These and other publicly available documents demonstrate the extent to which the CIA deals with information on Americans all of the time. Right now, the CIA is authorized to conduct signals intelligence as well as the human intelligence that is generally associated with the Agency, and the intelligence the CIA obtains from various sources, which can be collected in bulk, inevitably includes information on law-abiding Americans.

What do the rules say that apply to all of this information on Americans? What these rules say is, under this Executive order, the CIA can mostly do what it wants. If Ms. Elwood could find wiggle room in the airtight restrictions of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, I think the Senate ought to be asking: What might she do with the flexibility in the rules that govern what the CIA can do under this Executive order?

In fact, even when this Executive order includes limitations, there are usually exceptions. Guess who decides what the exceptions are. The CIA Director and the CIA General Counsel.

In short, the rules look like an invitation for the CIA Director and the general counsel to conduct secret programs and operations that rely on case-by-case decisions that have no clear or consistent legal framework. That is why it is so important that these nominees give us some sense of where they stand before they are confirmed.

I started with Mike Pompeo, who is now the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He wrote an article—an op-ed piece as it is called in the press—that called for the government to collect the bulk records of law-abiding Americans' communications and to combine all of those records—''publicly available financial and lifestyle information into a comprehensive, searchable database.''

That, in my view, is breathtaking. It makes what everybody was talking about with regard to the old phone records collection effort look like small potatoes.

At his hearing, I asked then-Congressman Pompeo whether this database would have any boundaries. In other words, he is setting up a brandnew database—bigger than anything people have seen. He is going to collect people's lifestyle information and who knows what else.

He said ''of course there are boundaries. Any collection and retention must be conducted in accordance with the Constitution's statutes and applicable Presidential directives.''

The real question is, What does that mean?

It means the person who is deciding what, if anything, Director Pompeo's CIA cannot do is the lawyer, and that is where the nominee—Ms. Elwood to be general counsel—comes in.

We might ask: How would these questions come up at the CIA?

As a hypothetical, one question I asked Director Pompeo was: What happens when a foreign partner provides the CIA with information that is known to include the communications of law-abiding Americans?

For example, what if the Russians collected information on Americans and, instead of providing it to WikiLeaks, gave it to the CIA? It could be sensitive information about political leaders and our country and journalists and religious leaders and just regular, law-abiding Americans. What would Director Pompeo do in that situation? When, if ever, would it be inappropriate for the CIA to receive, use, or distribute this information?

His answer was that it is highly fact-specific. He said he would consult with lawyers.

So, when she came for her nomination hearing, I said this is our chance. Let's ask the lawyer, Ms. Elwood, who is the nominee to be general counsel.

She said, like Director Pompeo, it would be based on all of the facts and circumstances. She said she had no personal experience with such a decision and was unable to offer an opinion.

This, in my view, is a prescription for trouble. We have a CIA Director and a nominee to be general counsel of the Agency, and neither of these two individuals will tell the Congress and the American people what the CIA will do under these circumstances which relate directly to the privacy of law-abiding and innocent Americans.

In her responses to committee questions, Ms. Elwood referred to one of the

documents that was released in January—the revised Attorney General guidelines—which she said imposed ''stringent and detailed restrictions'' on what the CIA can do with the intelligence it collects that is known to include information about Americans.

We are not talking about an insignificant amount of information on Americans. We are talking about bulk collection. We are talking about information on Americans that the rules, themselves, describe as ''significant in volume, proportion, or sensitivity.'' Obviously, the mere fact that the CIA collects and keeps this kind of information raises a lot of concerns about infringements of Americans' privacy.

I wanted to know what these stringent restrictions were that Ms. Elwood was talking about that she said would, again, just sort of magically protect the rights of Americans.

One of the issues our people are especially concerned about is whether the government, after it has collected lots of information on Americans, can conduct warrantless, backdoor searches for information about specific Americans. Those who dismiss the concerns about these backdoor searches argue that if the intelligence has already been collected, it is just no big deal to search it, even if the search is intended to obtain information on innocent, law-abiding Americans. The problem is, the more collection that is going on, the bigger the pool of Americans' information that is being searched.

This has come up with regard to section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which we are going to debate in the coming months. As my colleagues know, a bipartisan coalition—a bipartisan group of Senators and House Members—has been trying for years to get the intelligence community to tell us how many innocent, law-abiding Americans are being swept up in the section 702 collection. That number, if we can ever get it, is directly related to whether the intelligence community should be allowed to conduct warrantless searches on particular Americans, and it is directly related to the point I offered at the outset, which is that we must have policies that promote security and liberty. If we do it smartly, we can have both.

These questions I have described also apply to information that is collected under the Executive order. In the case of the Executive order, there is not even a discussion about how much information about Americans gets swept up.

So what do the rules say about backdoor searches that have been conducted by the CIA under this Executive order?

It turns out, the CIA can conduct searches through all of this information on law-abiding Americans if the search is ''reasonably designed to retrieve information related to a duly authorized activity of the CIA.''

Ms. Elwood has told the Intelligence Committee that there are really stringent requirements on this, but as I just read—''reasonably designed to retrieve information related to a duly authorized activity of the CIA''—that sure does not sound like it has much teeth in it to me. It does not sound very stringent to me.

I asked Ms. Elwood at the hearing what other restrictions might apply.

In a written response, she referred to training requirements, to record-keeping, and to the rule that the information must be destroyed after 5 years. None of that changes the fact that there is no meaningful standard for the searches. There is no check. There is no balance. Even the CIA's rule that the information can only be kept for 5 years has a huge loophole in that it can be extended by the CIA Director after consultation with—guess who again—the general counsel.

Again, we have rules that are vague to begin with, whose implementation is up to the discretion of the CIA Director and the general counsel. At this point, the Senate has virtually nothing to go on in terms of how this nominee for this critical general counsel position would exercise all of this power.

Another aspect of CIA activities that are authorized by the Executive order is that of the secret participation by someone who is working on behalf of the CIA and organizations in our country.

These activities would obviously be concerning to a lot of Americans. Most Americans probably believe the CIA is not even allowed to do this anymore, but it is. The question is, whether there are going to be rules that prevent abuses.

Since that is yet another modern-day, present-time topic, I said I am going to ask Ms. Elwood some questions on this. For example, for what purposes could the CIA secretly join a private organization in the United States?

The rules say the CIA Director can make case-by-case decisions with the concurrence of the general counsel, so I thought it would be appropriate to ask what the view is of the nominee to be the general counsel. Ms. Elwood's response was that she had no experience with this matter and looked forward to learning about it. And that, of course, is typical of so many of her answers. Repeatedly, she declined to provide any clarity on how she would interpret the CIA's authorities under this sweeping Executive order, but these are the calls she could make every single day if confirmed. At this point, the Senate has no clue how she would make them. It is my view that we cannot vote to confirm a nominee—particularly one who will operate entirely in secret—and just hope for the best.

I have other concerns about the Elwood nomination, particularly some of her views with respect to torture.

I asked Ms. Elwood whether the torture techniques the CIA had used violated the Detainee Treatment Act, often referred to as the McCain amendment. She had no opinion. I asked her whether those techniques violated the statutory prohibition on torture. She had no opinion. I asked her whether the torture techniques violated the War Crimes Act. She had no opinion. I asked her whether the torture techniques violated U.S. obligations under the Convention Against Torture, the Geneva Convention and other U.S. treaty obligations. She had no opinion.

How could she have no opinion? She has said that she read the 500-page executive summary of the Intelligence Committee's Torture Report. The horrific details of waterboarding, extended sleep deprivation, stress positions, and other torture techniques are known to everyone, but the nominee to be the CIA's General Counsel has no opinion on these matters.

Ms. Elwood did, however, commit to complying with the 2015 law prohibiting interrogation techniques not authorized by the Army Field Manual. That gets us again to the question of what decisions she would make now, based on current law. Everyone agrees that waterboarding is prohibited by the Army Field Manual, but the Army Field Manual can be changed. Fortunately, the 2015 law also prohibits any changes to the Army Field Manual that involve the use or threat of force. I asked her whether the CIA's torture techniques fell safely outside of anything the Army Field Manual could legally authorize. Her response, again, was that she had not studied the techniques.

So that was her position. She said she will comply with the law and agreed that the law prohibits interrogation techniques that involve the use or threat of force, but she refused to say whether waterboarding or any of the other CIA torture techniques falls outside that prohibition.

Finally, I asked the nominee how the constitutional rights of Americans would apply when the government seeks to kill them overseas. She responded that she had not considered the matter. Do these rights apply to legal permanent residents of the United States who are overseas? She did not have an opinion on that either.

To fully understand why this kind of avoidance is such a problem, we need to consider again what the CIA general counsel does and how she does it. I have been on the Senate Intelligence Committee since 2001. I have seen far too many intelligence programs go on for years before we find out about them. In so many of these cases, the problem lies in how senior lawyers interpreted their authorities. These interpretations are made in secret. They are made by a handful of people, and they are revealed to almost no one. We place almost immeasurable trust in the people who make these decisions. We cannot take this lightly.

The Senate and the American people have one shot—and one shot only—to get some insight into how those lawyers will make their decisions and how

they view the laws that apply to them. That one shot is the confirmation process. So when a nominee refused to take positions, it short-circuits the process. This is not acceptable. We cannot just confirm someone to be the CIA's general counsel without knowing what she will do in that position. That would be an abdication of our duty.

I want to close by saying that, at this extraordinary time in American history, a time when our country—and if you sit on the Intelligence Committee, as I have for a number of years, you go into the Intelligence Committee room, and it is all behind closed doors, and you often walk out of there very concerned about the well-being of our people, given some of the grave national security threats we hear about once or twice a week.

The point is that our choice is not between security and liberty; it is between smart policies and ones that are not so smart. For example, on this floor, when the leadership of the committee was interested in weakening strong encryption, which is what keeps our people safe—we have our whole lives wrapped up in a smartphone, and smart encryption ensures that terrorists and hackers can't get at that information. It ensures that pedophiles can't get access to the location tracker and pick up where your child might be. We all know how much our parents care about the well-being of kids.

People are saying: Let's just build backdoors into our products, and I said I am going to fight that. I will fight it with everything I have whenever it is proposed because it is bad for security, bad for liberty, bad for our companies that are trying to continue to offer high-skill, high-wage jobs because our competitors won't do it, and so far we have been able to hold it off.

As we seek in the days ahead to come up with smart policies that protect security and liberty, we have to get answers from those in the government who are going to have these key positions. Given the fact that the CIA Director, Mike Pompeo, made it clear in his hearing that he was going to rely on the person chosen by the Senate as his general counsel, I felt it was very important that we get some answers from the person we will be voting on shortly.

I regret to say to the Senate that this morning we are largely in the dark with respect to Ms. Elwood's views on the key questions I have outlined today.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, President Trump has routinely attacked basic American freedoms—of the press, of peaceful assembly, of religion, of speech. When he lost the popular vote, President-elect Trump assailed the integrity of our electoral process and falsely claimed that millions of people voted illegally. When the press exposed those falsehoods, Mr. Trump dismissed credible reporting as ''fake news.'' When the courts ruled that his travel ban was unlawful, President Trump accused judges of abetting terrorists.

These actions have consequences beyond our own borders and embolden dictators around the world. President Trump displays a worldview that favors the military over diplomacy and transactional relationships over strategic alliances. President Trump's uncritical embrace of autocrats like Russian President Putin, Egyptian President Sisi, Turkish President Erdogan, and Philippine President Duterte is a repudiation of every reformer and activist seeking freedom from tyranny. It is a repudiation of America's values and founding principles.

President Trump's approach to the world is shortsighted and self-defeating. The greatest threats to U.S. national security come from countries that are corrupt, poorly governed, and fraught with poverty and disease. These countries require sustained engagement and assistance to prevent the kind of threats that could require American soldiers to go into war. These countries require American leadership and the American example to help address the root causes of conflict and to give a voice to the aspirations of their people.

That is why President Trump's proposed 32 percent cut to the budget of the State Department, his failure to put forward nominees for leadership positions, and his disrespect for the career employees who serve our country are so dangerous. By undermining American influence abroad, President Trump erodes American strength.

While John Sullivan has an extensive career in public service, I am concerned that he lacks experience at the State Department. An understanding of the institution is, in many ways, as important as an understanding of our complex diplomatic terrain. Despite these concerns, I was encouraged by the statements and commitments he made at his confirmation hearing.

In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Sullivan committed to promoting American values abroad, saying: ''Our greatest asset is our commitment to the fundamental values expressed at the founding of our nation; the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These basic human rights are the bedrock of our republic and at the heart of American leadership in the world.''

He underscored that our alliances and partnerships ''have been the cornerstone of our national security in the post-war era.'' He commended the foreign service officers, civil servants, and locally employed staff who faithfully serve our country every day.

These statements are a rejection of the worldview proposed by President Trump. I hope that Mr. Sullivan honors these statements in office. For this reason, I support his nomination for Deputy Secretary of State.

Mr. WYDEN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PUERTO RICO'S FISCAL CRISIS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the significance of the unprecedented events now occurring in Puerto Rico.

According to the May 16 editorial in the Wall Street Journal, ''The legal brawl over Puerto Rico's bankruptcy begins this week, and it will be long and ugly.''

As we have seen in Greece and Detroit, what is happening in Puerto Rico should be a wake-up call for fiscally distressed States—meaning our 50 States, our cities, and our territories—to get their own houses in order. It is the canary in the mine that ought to be available to everybody. At the same time, it should be a cautionary tale for those who seek to extend similar bankruptcy authority to our own 50 States.

In 2015, after years of fiscal mismanagement and borrowing to finance their operations, Puerto Rico declared that its debt was unpayable and had to be restructured; however, because Puerto Rico lacked access to chapter 9 of the Bankruptcy Code, restructuring its complex debt outside of the court presented a challenge.

I held a hearing in the Judiciary Committee to examine this issue in December of 2015. We learned at that hearing that while bankruptcy is an effective tool to restructure debt, it merely treats the symptom and it doesn't solve the disease. I told you so, in that vein. I shared my views and the views of many others that unless Puerto Rico addressed its fiscal mismanagement woes, extending bankruptcy authority alone couldn't fix the problem. I told you so that, instead, it would merely kick the can down the road and harm thousands of retirees in Iowa and elsewhere who would bear the costs of Puerto Rico's irresponsible fiscal behavior. The Obama administration, though, pressed Congress to act and to provide Puerto Rico with an orderly bankruptcy-like process to restructure its debt.

According to the testimony of one Treasury official, ''Without a comprehensive restructuring framework, Puerto Rico will continue to default on its debt, and litigation will intensify. . . . As the cascading defaults and litigation unfold, there is real risk of another lost decade, this one more damaging than the last.'' So now, even with a comprehensive restructuring framework, there is still a real risk of another lost decade.

Ultimately, this debt restructuring framework was coupled with an independent oversight board and adopted as the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act, referred to as PROMESA. This approach,

we were told, would tackle Puerto Rico's debt crisis in an orderly way and would help to remedy the years of fiscal mismanagement. Nevertheless, I remained concerned that PROMESA and its bankruptcy-like provisions would invite years of litigation and uncertainty due to the lack of existing court precedent.

So it should be no surprise that a recent Bloomberg article titled ''Puerto Rico's Bankruptcy Fight is About to Plunge Into the Unknown'' described the bankruptcy process as ''a circular firing'' squad with ''no established rule book to shape what comes next.'' The article reports that one market analyst ''foresees a chaotic brew of lawsuits'' because ''nobody has any idea what is going to happen.''

According to one news report, this is just the beginning, as PROMESA's bankruptcy provisions are ''more likely to face years of appeal than a typical case.''

Despite assurances otherwise, what happens next in the months and years to follow may be far-reaching and likely will impact us all. In particular, prior to the enactment of PROMESA, Puerto Rico, like the States, couldn't declare bankruptcy. I told you this last year, and it is as I predicted last year—granting Puerto Rico the authority to restructure all of its debts, including its State-like constitutional obligations, would be viewed as precedent for giving States similar authority.

I am not really surprised to see this is happening right now.

Getting back to the fact that I told the Senate a year ago. This past September, William Isaac, the former head of the FDIC, called on Congress to pass a law ''giv[ing] Illinois the option of utilizing chapter 9, which is akin to what Congress just did for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.''

The New York Times reported on May 3 that ''bankruptcy lawyers and public finance experts are watching Puerto Rico's case closely, to see if it shows a path that financially distressed states like Illinois might also one day take.''

The Chicago Tribune's editorial board recently wrote that investors are growing nervous about the talk of States seeking a bankruptcy system after the fashion of Puerto Rico, calling Puerto Rico ''the frightening ghost of Illinois future.''

The editorial wondered how much more difficult it would be for States to borrow money if lenders knew the States could shirk their obligations in bankruptcy when that debt becomes due.

For those who weren't listening to me last year, those who dismissed concerns that PROMESA would set a troubling and dangerous precedent should take notice and make sure that a one-time piece of legislation does not create a new norm. I hold out hope that PROMESA might manage to provide some help for Puerto Rico.

Success, though, will ultimately require strong leadership from the Commonwealth's leaders, which, for years, that leadership has been very lacking.

There is a lesson to be learned. The fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico should motivate all 50 States, our cities, and territories to find the courage now to make tough choices, which are the foundation of responsible governance, rather than look to the Federal Government and bankruptcy as a way out. If they do not, the effect could be long-lasting, harming the vulnerable both within their populations and outside of their borders.

Obviously, what a lot of smart people told us a year ago to solve Puerto Rico's debt problems simply has not worked out.

So at a time when States, citizens, and markets are all watching, we must stress fiscal responsibility and pay attention to what is happening there in Puerto Rico. Otherwise, the uncertainty and chaos we were assured would not come to pass may be just over the horizon.

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

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on Tuesday President Trump sent his proposed fiscal year 2018 budget to Congress. A budget is supposed to reflect the President's priorities and the values our country holds dear. Unfortunately, President Trump's full budget shows how much disdain he has for supporting American families here at home, how little he values America's strong leadership around the world, and how much he misunderstands the essential role the Federal Government has in keeping our air and water clean, roads and bridges functioning, and the public safe from deadly diseases and other threats.

This President's budget shows how much he values corporate profits and polluters over children's health and demonstrates an irrational ignorance of basic principles that have worked for and against the American economy throughout the years. The budget wastes money on a border wall and deportation force that will not make America any safer and will tear apart families and communities.

President Trump fails to uphold the promise he made as a candidate to protect American workers and seniors, and he breaks new ground in the level of uncertainty he is willing to inject into our economy, our local communities, and relationships with our historical allies and economic partners. More than any other Presidential budget in recent memory, this budget must be considered dead on arrival.

President Trump's full budget for fiscal year 2018 is an exercise in extremism. President Trump wants to ax $610 billion from Medicaid—the program that lifts up America's veterans and the most vulnerable men, women, and children, capping the funding in order to finance tax cuts for big businesses and the wealthiest among us. The budget further slashes the social safety net by cutting the food stamp program and eliminating critical social services programs. It directly hurts children by cutting $6 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program. The President wants to choke off funding for essential scientific research at the National Institutes of Health and infectious disease detection and response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while also slashing funding for key global health initiatives that ensure economic stability.

Further demonstrating his misunderstanding of the ripple effect Federal investments can have, the President inexplicably wants to end the economic development assistance programs to rural and economically distressed communities. I was particularly disappointed that he would eliminate the Appalachia Regional Commission, which is very important to the people in the western part of my State as an economic tool that can bring badly needed jobs to Appalachia country.

He wants to put the American dream out of reach for would-be homeowners and seekers of safe and affordable housing with the elimination of HUD's rental assistance and homeowner partnership programs. The President calls for shifting more than $143 billion in additional student loan payments to hard-working students and their families. And he recommends ending a vital program that helps first responders, law enforcement, teachers, nurses, librarians, public safety, and military have a chance to reduce the burden of their student loans so that they can continue to serve their communities. The President also continues the ill-conceived Republican assault on Federal workers and retirees with his proposal for wholesale slashing the programs and staff, such as the economic and environmentally important EPA and Chesapeake Bay Program, making it nearly impossible for many departments to carry out their basic mission.

I want to talk a few minutes about the foreign assistance budget. I have the privilege of being the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In terms of our Nation's foreign policy, if the budget is a reflection of values, then what the Trump administration values is an American retreat from the world that would make the United States less safe and secure. The numbers speak for themselves in the narrow-minded budget release we have received.

What is most perplexing about the administration's combined 31.7 percent gutting of international affairs spending—as Secretary Defense Mattis has said: If you don't fund the State Department Diplomacy Center, you had

better give the Defense Department more bullets and soldiers. This is counterproductive to making the world a safer place for America.

America is safer when the United States helps feed millions of starving people in Africa and the Middle East, helps Europe defend its democratic institutions from Russia interference, helps support countries and international organizations caring for vulnerable refugee populations, helps train farmers and other technical workers, helps lead the world in fighting climate change and promoting global health, and helps fund programs to protect human rights and promote democracy. In each of these areas, the administration has taken a penny-wise and pound-foolish approach that will cost lives abroad and endanger Americans here at home.

Each of the programs I mentioned are either eliminated or there are significant cuts, making it impossible for our dedicated Foreign Service officers to carry out the critically important missions they undertake.

As I look at the massive spending cuts put forward by the White House for vital national security, it is impossible to conclude that this is anything but an ''America alone'' budget—one that, if enacted, will have disastrous effects on our standing in the world.

Luckily, the majority of Members of Congress know this budget is dead on arrival. I look forward to working with like-minded Republican colleagues to make sure nothing remotely close to this budget is enacted.

Fortunately, our Founders developed a system of checks and balances with the Constitution providing that Congress appropriates public funds. It is our responsibility to pass the appropriations bill. I intend to do everything within my power to work with Republicans, using the model of the fiscal year 2017 Omnibus appropriations, to prevent enactment of this outlandish executive branch attempt to cripple our economy and do lasting damage to our Nation's global leadership. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that we have a more realistic budget that helps the American public, contributes to genuine economic growth, and furthers America's true values.

I want to cite some examples in some areas as to how detrimental this budget is. First of all, there are economic assumptions made by the President's budget that are just not realistic. He assumes there is going to be a 3-percent economic growth rate, which economists tell us is simply not realistic. What does that mean? That means there is about $2 trillion that is being used by economic assumptions which have no justification, meaning that we are going to see significant budget deficits increase if this budget were to become law. The budget double counts some of these gains in order to offset tax reductions. He is putting our economy at risk.

In healthcare, the President's budget continues the administration's misguided and ill-conceived efforts to jeopardize the health and well-being of our constituents under the Affordable Care Act. Make no mistake about it, President Trump is trying to make sure that the healthcare system in this country does not work. He is deliberately putting at risk the cautionary provisions that are in the Affordable Care Act, which ensure that many of our constituents have affordable health rates without outrageous deductibles or copays. The Trump administration is jeopardizing that.

The Trump administration is jeopardizing the Medicaid system—$610 billion cut in the Medicaid system, which is critically important for some of our most vulnerable people. There are 280,000 Marylanders who gained essential health coverage through the Medicaid expansion who will be left without access to care. There are an estimated 1.25 million Maryland Medicaid enrollees who will no longer be able to depend on benefits like mental health and substance abuse, pediatric dental services, or maternity coverage.

Our President is recommending a $6 billion cut in the Children's Health Insurance Program, the CHIP program. That is absolutely outrageous. There is a bipartisan effort in Congress to make sure the children of America have the health they need.

Then there is a $7 billion—22-percent—cut in the National Institutes of Health. Democrats and Republicans have come together, recognizing that America has provided the true leadership and basic research to deal with the mysteries of illness, and the President wants to reverse that trend. That will not only cost us in terms of our health advancements, but it will also hurt our economy.

The President cuts the funds to the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. I thought we had made a commitment that we are going to narrow the gap of discrimination in our healthcare system. The President's budget moves in the opposite direction.

In Social Services and Social Security, the President, on his campaign trail, promised not to cut the Social Security system. He broke that promise with this budget. These cuts are a ''Robin Hood in reverse'' budget. His cuts in the Supplemental Security Income Program and Social Security Disability Insurance Program will be devastating for low- and modest-income individuals, as well as persons with disabilities and those over 65 years of age.

So we have seen cuts to programs the President claimed he would not cut when he was a candidate. The budget cuts nearly $200 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, or food stamps, which helps low-income Americans with food purchases. He also cuts the TANF Program, which helps people who are in need of assistance. The budget eliminates the LIHEAP, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program, and State Energy Program. I guess Donald Trump wants low-income Americans to freeze in the dark. This is shameful and reprehensible.

Yes, there is money for some advancements—the advancement of the so-called border wall with Mexico. I visited Mexico just a few months ago. I visited the U.S.-Mexico border. I couldn't find one border security guard, security personnel, who felt that building a wall made any sense. It will not keep out the illegal flow of people or drugs, and it will compromise our ability to work with our neighbors in the south to control immigration and to control drugs. The President's Executive order on immigration and the President's fiscal year 2018 budget ramp up deportation forces inside the United States, which will do more to harm our national security and public safety than to help. We shouldn't be moving in that direction.

Legal Services is one of the areas I worked on for a long time with my Republican colleagues to make sure we fund the Legal Services Corporation. The Trump budget completely eliminates that funding. The late Justice Antonin Scalia said at Legal Services Corporation's 40th Anniversary Conference in 2014: ''LSC pursues the most fundamental of American ideals, and it pursues equal justice in those areas of life most important to the lives of our citizens.''

We believe in equal justice under the law. If a person cannot get legal help, they cannot get equal justice under the law. And the President says there is no Federal role for this. I hope that we will soundly reject that.

The President's budget eliminates the Community Development Block Grant Program. That is very troubling. Here is one of the more flexible programs we offer the local government in order to be able to make their own decisions, and the President's budget eliminates that program.

The President's budget eliminates many of our programs under agriculture, which will hurt our rural areas and hurt our farming community. The budget proposes to eliminate new enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program and funding for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. I am very familiar with the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. It was put in the last farm reauthorization bill. It was done as an effort to help deal with conservation in critically important areas, including the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It is a very important program to preserving our bay and preserving farm land so that we can have both a healthy bay and healthy agriculture. The President eliminates those programs. I could go on and on about agriculture—the many programs that are either severely restricted or eliminated under the President's budget.

In education, the fiscal year 2018 budget released by President Trump

may be entitled ''A New Foundation for American Greatness,'' but President Trump and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos have severely undercut our students, educators, and public schools. The budget proposes to eliminate the Preschool Development Grant Program, a program that has successfully placed more than 2,700 additional 4-year-olds in high-quality preschool programs across my State. The vulnerable children in this program get a boost that helps them to lower the achievement gap among students of color, low-income children, and children with disabilities across my State. We should be expanding these programs, not reducing them. And 85 Members of this body voted in favor of the Every Student Succeeds Act and the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program. That progress is jeopardized by the President's budget.

Yes, he finds money for a new program to help school choice programs, which will undermine the progress we have made in public education. Mr. President, 95 percent of our students get their education through the public schools, and that is jeopardized by the $1.25 billion the President has included in his budget for school choice programs.

Maryland families understand the value of higher education. For too many, the cost of higher education means that it is difficult, if not impossible, for their children to have the higher education they need. Yet the President's budget takes away some of the tools we have in order to afford higher education. That is just not right. We should be making higher education more affordable, not less affordable.

In the environment, the President's proposed budget would eliminate the Chesapeake Bay Program. The Chesapeake Bay Program and related efforts are delivering encouraging results throughout the watershed and have built a tremendous movement forward. Yet President Trump has still targeted them for elimination. The local governments are doing their job in stewardship of the bay. The States are doing their job. Our stakeholders are doing their job. We depend upon the Federal Government to monitor and make sure that the programs are there—that all stakeholders are doing their fair share. The elimination of the Chesapeake Bay Program would jeopardize all of that progress. We cannot let that happen.

The President's budget would cut the EPA budget by 31.4 percent, the most severe cut of any major Federal agency. The investment in our Nation's water and waste water infrastructure has been flatlined through this budget proposal.

What in the world makes President Trump think that our Nation's drinking water infrastructure shall be kept at status quo? Don't we all remember what happened in Flint, MI? We have discovered similar things in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In Baltimore, our public school system cannot connect their water fountains to the water supply because of lead contamination. We need to have a greater commitment to make sure that the water supply to America is safe.

Under the budget, the Office of Compliance would be cut by one-third of its budget. That is EPA not being able to enforce the law. Aren't we a country of the rule of law? You would not think so under President Trump's budget.

The President's budget also does not contain a critical infrastructure plan. We heard that during the campaign. But nowhere in this budget is he providing for that increase. Instead, it proposes cuts in some of the highway trust programs.

Every day, civil servants perform countless tasks that help support and defend and protect America. Civil servants are saving lives, empowering small businesses, keeping America safe from harm, and otherwise ensuring a safe and prosperous future for our country, including our children and families. We know that our Federal employees often perform the type of work that no one else can do. It is a highly qualified Federal workforce. On May 5, Donald Trump issued a proclamation declaring May 7 through 13, 2017, as Public Service Recognition Week. He stated:

> Throughout my first 100 days, I have seen the tremendous work civil servants do to fulfill our duty to the American people. At all levels of government, our public servants put our country and our people first.

He has a bizarre way of showing his appreciation. Earlier this week, he released a budget that punishes Federal workers by making them pay much more for their pensions, an additional $5,000 for an average Federal worker, while making these pensions much smaller.

The relentless assault on the Federal workforce must end. The civilian workforce was smaller last year than it was 40 years ago, according to data from the Office of Personnel Management. Federal workers increasingly have been asked to do more and more with less and less. They have already sacrificed financially, contributing $190 billion to deficit reduction just since 2011.

Workers hired in 2012 already are paying more for smaller pensions. Sequestration-related furloughs cost Federal workers $1 billion in lost pay, and there was a 3-year pay freeze from 2011 to 2013, and substandard rises since then. Salaries and wages have fallen 6.5 percent since 2010, adjusted for inflation.

Now comes the latest attack on the Federal worker's pension, on top of continued attacks on pay, healthcare and other benefits, collective bargaining, and due process rights. President Trump would eliminate the annual cost of living adjustments for people in the Federal Employees Retirement System, including current retirees, and reduce them by half a percentage point for people in the old Civil Service Retirement System, including current retirees.

According to certified financial planner Art Stein, the annuity would lose one-third of its value over 20 years if inflation averages between 2 and 3 percent annually, and nearly half of its value if inflation averages 4 percent. According to the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, the average FERS annuitant would lose $99,471 over 20 years, and the average CSRS annuitant would lose $60,576 over 20 years under the Trump budget.

That is outrageous. That is outrageous. We are talking about people who are already retired. They can't reenter the workforce. They have no choice. Yet we are telling them that they are not going to get what we promised. It is important to understand that 85 percent of the Federal workforce is located beyond the Washington metropolitan area. Federal workers are in big cities and small towns across America, striving to make things better for their neighbors.

Do we really want to engage in a race to the bottom with respect to our Federal workers? These are the people who make sure our parents' Social Security checks arrive on time. They make sure the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat are safe. They are trying to find a cure for our spouse's cancer and our sibling's type 1 diabetes.

They support our sons and daughters in harm's way, and they care for the wounded warriors at home. They patrol our borders and discover and disrupt terrorist threats aimed at our community. They are working to ensure that our grandchildren inherit a habitable climate. When we punish Federal workers—30 percent of whom are veterans, by the way—we are not just harming them and their families, but we are harming each and every American.

I intend to do everything within my power to work with Republicans, using the model of the fiscal year 2017 omnibus appropriations, to prevent the enactment of this dangerous executive branch attempt to cripple our economy and do lasting damage to our Nation's global leadership. Congress has the responsibility to ensure that we have a more realistic budget that helps the American public, contributes to genuine economic growth, and furthers America's true values.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Utah.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the continuing effort to repeal and replace ObamaCare. This effort has essentially been going on since the day the bill was signed into law. I think most of us on the Republican side recognize the overwhelming consensus surrounding the

failures of ObamaCare as a major reason we currently find ourselves in the majority.

As you know, the House passed the American Health Care Act, a bill that would repeal and replace ObamaCare, earlier this month. This is an important step in the process. Later today, we expect to hear from the Congressional Budget Office about the House bill. The CBO score will lay down an important marker for the repeal and replace efforts in the Senate. It will allow us to work to ensure that the House bill fits into the constraints of the reconciliation rules in the Senate, while we continue to strive toward our own policy goals to implement patient-centered healthcare and healthcare reforms that address cost and promote choice and competition.

I am very interested in what they say. These changes are more important than ever. Just today, we received a report from HHS that, from the time ObamaCare took effect through 2017, there was an average premium increase of 105 percent across the 39 States using healthcare.gov. This is just one snapshot of the runaway costs of ObamaCare, and it is just one of many examples indicating why we need to act as quickly as possible to repeal and replace the misguided law.

As the Senate continues to discuss the policy matters related to this effort, we will need to confront a number of different issues as we work to provide enduring reforms for our beleaguered healthcare system. As chairman of the Senate committee with jurisdiction over most of the salient issues under discussion, I want to make my views on these matters very clear.

First, it is my view that all of the ObamaCare taxes need to go. We should not be treating the ObamaCare taxes as a smorgasbord, picking and choosing which ones to keep and which to discard. I don't think there is a single tax increase in ObamaCare that has enjoyed support on this Republican side.

When all is said and done, the tax provisions of the Affordable Care Act represented a trillion-dollar hit on the economy in just the first 10 years. That is nearly 1 percent of the projected gross domestic product over the same period. In my view, it would be inappropriate, after spending the better part of a decade railing against ObamaCare's burdensome job-killing taxes, for us to then turn around and say that some of them are fine so long as they are being used to fund Republican healthcare proposals.

It is very simple. We need to repeal all of the ObamaCare taxes—the medical device tax, the health insurance tax, the so-called Cadillac tax, the taxes on healthcare savings and pharmaceuticals, and several others. They all have to go.

Second, we need to fully repeal the individual mandate. There has been some talk about keeping the mandate around temporarily, if nothing else, to help shore up the new system. But as I said with the ObamaCare taxes, Republicans have spent years condemning the individual mandate as an unconstitutional assault on individual liberty. We have also argued that it was ineffective and that it has failed to draw enough younger and healthier consumers into the insurance market in order to offset the cost of ObamaCare's draconian market reform mandates.

I don't see how we can now turn on a dime and say that the individual mandate is now somehow acceptable because we are using it to prop up a system that Republicans have designed. Like the taxes, the individual mandate, in my view, needs to be repealed. Lastly, we need to resist any temptation to alter the tax treatment of employer-provided health insurance as part of this particular exercise. Don't get me wrong. There have been a number of health reform proposals over the years that have dealt with this issue, including a legislative framework that I drafted, along with two of my colleagues. However, given the limitations we face in this current exercise and the fact that we are not starting from a blank slate but rather attempting to repeal a law that has been implemented for a number of years, we should be wary of the impact of pulling employer-sponsored insurance into this current debate.

The purpose of this budget reconciliation exercise to repeal and replace ObamaCare is to address costs in the individual markets. I believe it is important that everyone, whether they are Members of Congress, stakeholders in the business community, or living elsewhere in the country, manage their expectations about the possible outcomes of this process given the limitations we are facing.

While the constraints inherent to the budget reconciliation process may be inconvenient at the specific moment, they serve a number of important purposes. Under this process, the Senate will need to reduce the deficit by at least as much as the House bill. There is no way around that. The process for determining what provisions of the House bill will need to be changed is still ongoing. Of course, we will have to take a good long look at the numbers we get from CBO later today.

Not only do we need to take into account the CBO numbers and the budget rules, but we also need to consider what the best policy is, and, at the end of the day, what approach is doable. We can do a lot in this exercise, but we should not make this the be-all and end-all of our healthcare reform effort.

As I said before, everyone should be managing their expectations at this point. While we can and should be ambitious in our efforts, we need to be realistic about the limitations that exist and be willing to practice the art of the doable, to compromise, and to really recognize what issues will need to be set aside for another day.

None of this is going to be easy, but I believe we are up to the challenge. I look forward to working with my colleagues on these issues and to finding solutions that will help us keep the promises we made to our constituents.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to follow the comments made by the President pro tempore of the Senate—the Senator from Utah—talking about problems that people have and problems that grow every day with their future look at healthcare and what it may mean for their families.

This is a top-of-the-mind issue for families in Utah, or Missouri, where I am from, or Montana, where the Presiding Officer is from, or Massachusetts. Anywhere in the country, anyone who is looking at this system and hoping to have a system they could rely on is finding that it is just not working. This is a plan that clearly has failed. It was a plan that gave all kinds of assurances, virtually none of which have been kept.

In our State today, we got some bad news in Missouri about what that health insurance exchange looks like next year. Blue Cross Blue Shield serves 30 counties in our State. Another Blue Cross-related group, Anthem, serves the rest of the State. But today, Blue Cross Blue Shield announced that it is going to pull out of the exchanges next year. Some 31,000 people in 25 counties around Kansas City will have no insurer at this moment who is willing to sell policies on the individual exchange. This is devastating news for those families—maybe they are already on their second or third insurance company in as many years—trying to wade through yet another individual plan that tells them what might or might not be covered. This is certainly a long way from the assurances that you would be able to keep your plan and you would be able to continue to see the doctors you like. It seems a long way from that pledge. Remember that pledge? If you like your plan, you can keep your plan. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. It didn't turn out to be that way at all.

In fact, in the five other counties that Blue Cross is leaving in our State—and I don't say this with any disrespect toward that nonprofit company—they are losing money. This system won't work, and that is why we are down from multiple companies willing to offer insurance in all kinds of counties around the country to now States, like Iowa, having no insurance company at all that will offer an individual policy anywhere.

In the five metropolitan counties in the Kansas area, they have three competitors this year in those five counties. Humana announced in February that they would be leaving next year. Blue Cross announced today that they would be leaving. So 5 metropolitan counties at this moment, at least, have only one company that will even offer

a policy, and 25 counties have no company that will offer a policy based on that announcement. If you only have one choice, do you really have any choices at all?

Under this plan, unless we go in a very different direction, the choice is to buy the policy or pay the penalty. This exchange that was promised where the average family would see their insurance costs go down $2,500 a year—this is as far from that promise as you could possibly get. Not only has your policy likely gone up more than $2,500, but your deductible has gone up in even higher percentages than that.

Certainly, 30 percent of the counties in America right now only have one company that will offer insurance. As I said earlier, our neighboring State to the north, Iowa, has no company that will offer insurance to anybody on the individual market. What kind of system is that?

In my State, we have 114 counties and the city of St. Louis in addition to those 114 counties. At this moment, 97 of them have only one company that will offer insurance. Unless things change dramatically, in January, 25 of those 97 will have no company that will offer insurance. Now, 77 counties—unless the one company offering insurance decides it can't participate in that market either—would have only one choice. I think it is likely that those 77 counties will see some change in whether they have one choice or no choice.

Last week, I came to the floor to talk about Missourians who have problems and who are seeing their out-of-pocket costs skyrocket under this. Let me share another story about one of the several people we heard from this week.

Holly is a cancer survivor. She lives in Southeast Missouri. She was forced again this year to switch insurance policies when the insurance company she had left the individual exchange, the ObamaCare exchange. That left Holly with only one choice. Again, people in the vast majority of our counties have the same option—they have one option. Holly had one option, and that carrier didn't cover any of her four cancer doctors. Now, remember, this is a cancer survivor who literally has been in a fight for her life, and now she can't get a policy that allows her to see the doctors in whom, in that fight for her life, she developed confidence. So that means she can't see her oncologist under any policy she can get. She can't see the radiation oncologist, the surgical oncologist, and the reconstructive surgeon. None of those people are now available to her.

This is in a world where Holly, you, me—all of us were told: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Well, she liked all four of her doctors, and she can't keep any of those doctors. We were told: If you like your policy, you can keep your policy. If it weren't so serious, looking back at that promise, it would be like it was some cruel joke that somebody is coming up with that couldn't have been further from the truth. When you are battling cancer and you lose access to the doctors you know and trust, no reasonable person can argue to you that the system we have is working. The status quo is unacceptable. It is clearly unsustainable.

There is a lot of discussion about what kind of change we are going to have. The ''why'' here is more important than the ''how.'' The ''why'' here is the most important part of this debate because the reason we have to change is that the system we have is absolutely not working.

Americans like Holly and all the families in the Kansas City area who are certain to lose this year's coverage next year may or may not have coverage at all. No company besides this one company that left was willing to be there this year. They deserve better. That is why I am going to continue to work with my Senate colleagues to give families more choices to expand their access to the healthcare providers they want and the kind of insurance coverage they would like to have.

This plan simply hasn't worked, it isn't working, and it is going to get worse before it gets better. That is why we are debating how to change it, not debating the effort that has totally failed. Now we need to get in and figure out how to stabilize this marketplace and answer those important questions for families all over this country who not only don't have the coverage they want, but they also don't have access to the healthcare they need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I congratulate my colleague from Missouri for the excellent comments he made.

I bring to the floor a report that came out last evening, which is essentially the analysis that the Obama administration never wanted the American people to see, and it has to do with ObamaCare from 2013 to 2017. This report that the Obama administration would love to hide from the American people makes the point that my colleague from Missouri just made.

In those years, from 2013 to 2017, once ObamaCare came into place, premiums around the country in the States that are buying on the Federal ObamaCare exchange went up 105 percent on average—more than double. It more than doubled in 20 States, and it tripled in three States: Oklahoma, Alaska, and Alabama. In Wyoming, it went up 107 percent in just 4 years. Tell me something else that has gone up by that price in our lives anywhere over that short period of time. Those are the numbers that are out today.

More than 7 years ago, the Washington Democrats wrote an enormously costly and complicated healthcare law. They forced it through the Senate, and they made lots of promises. They promised it would provide care for less money. They promised that you could keep your doctor and that you could keep your insurance. They promised that if you just allowed Washington to have more control, everything would be better for you. It hasn't worked out that way. These are the numbers we are looking at today, and it looks as if prices are going to go up again next year because of the mandates and the requirements of the Obama healthcare law.

In Connecticut, insurance companies say they want an average increase of about 24 percent; in Maryland, the average is 45 percent; and in Oregon, 17 percent. Americans are again facing double-digit increases in their ObamaCare premiums next year, just like this past year.

Some companies simply said: Hey, I am done. I am not going to sell anymore. It is just not worth it.

That is what Aetna has done—pulled out entirely. The thing that is so interesting about Aetna's decision is that they were one of the major cheerleaders early on back in the beginning of ObamaCare. They said: Oh yeah, we want to do this. We want to sell insurance all around the country. Well, now they are pulling out of ObamaCare all across America. What that means for people at home is that they have fewer choices.

People living in two-thirds of the counties in this country—and in every county in my home State of Wyoming—are down to fewer and fewer choices. We have one choice of a carrier to buy from on the exchange in Wyoming. In two-thirds of the counties, people have only one or two choices. There are now places where people have no choices. Even if they get a subsidy under ObamaCare, there is no place they can use it, so it is useless to them.

The companies that remain—what are they doing to help try to control costs? Well, they are cutting back on access to doctors and to hospitals, as we just heard is the situation of the patient in Missouri.

Democrats say that people have to buy the insurance anyway because they say they put a mandate on it. Americans, like it or not, you have to buy ObamaCare insurance. If you don't like it, we are going to fine you. That is what the Democrats said. Well, in spite of the mandate, 20 million Americans said ''No, thank you,'' and about 8 million paid a fine. Another 12 million got an exemption because there are actually 41 different ways you can get exempted from ObamaCare. People realize it is not a good deal for them. They know ObamaCare has made insurance so expensive that it is not a good value for their hard-earned dollars.

It is astonishing to hear Democrats now say that basically the problem was that Washington didn't have enough control. We need more government control, they are saying. There are a number of Democrats who want a single-payer healthcare system. Some call

it Medicare for all. They can call it what they want—it means higher costs and more Washington control over the healthcare American families need.

The State of Vermont looked at this idea a couple of years ago. Even in this very small, very liberal State, they dropped the idea almost immediately. Why? Because they said it was too expensive.

That didn't stop other States from looking at it. Recently, this occurred in the State of California. Democrats in California recently offered a plan to have the State take control of all healthcare for everyone who lives there. Universal healthcare for all, they call it—doctor visits, hospitals, inpatient care, outpatient care, emergencies, dental, vision, mental health, nursing homes, everything, cradle to grave, universal health coverage.

So what do the stories in the California papers say about this? Well, they did a budget analysis. The budget office of the State of California did a budget analysis and said: What would such a thing cost? They came up with a cost of $400 billion a year. That sounds like a big number, but how do you put that in perspective? What else can you do? Four hundred billion dollars. So they said: Well, let's compare it to the budget of the entire State of California. The entire budget for the State of California today is $190 billion, so the cost of universal healthcare alone is twice the budget of the whole State of California. That includes teachers, firefighters, police, everything. They are proposing to spend twice the amount that they spend on everything on universal healthcare.

So what do the Democrats say? Well, we will just have to raise taxes. That is their answer to so much of everything. I guess they figure that hard-working families in California would need to pay these taxes every year—not just once but every year because that price tag is $400 billion each and every year.

Democrats have no good ideas on how to deal with this collapse of ObamaCare. Republicans are offering real solutions. We are looking for ways to bring costs down, to give people more freedom, and to give people more control over their own healthcare. We are working to make sure people can get the care they need from a doctor they choose at a lower cost. We don't have that with ObamaCare.

The Democrats are pushing the exact opposite approach. They are offering higher costs, higher taxes, more government control, more government say in your family's life.

ObamaCare has failed. Republicans are committed to finding long-term solutions to our Nation's healthcare needs.

Thank you. 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. 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. Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon.

PARIS AGREEMENT

Mr. President, there is an African proverb that goes something like this: If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.

The Paris Agreement was developed in that spirit; that 195 nations and territories can do more to protect our planet from climate change, the greatest environmental challenge of our lifetime, than the United States or any country can do isolated or on its own. Nearly 200 countries now have agreed to do their part to limit our global temperature rise by developing national plans to reduce their own emissions.

We know climate change is a global challenge that does not respect national borders. Emissions anywhere affect people everywhere, with the poorest and most vulnerable populations affected most. There is a reason why we call it ''global warming.'' We know no one country, no one region, no one continent can solve this problem alone.

President Trump's inner circle has a different take on this historical agreement. For instance, during an appearance on ''Fox and Friends'' last month, Scott Pruitt, the EPA Administrator, denounced the Paris Agreement, calling it ''a bad deal for America.''

Asked about his biggest objection to the accord, this is what he said. He claimed China and India had no obligation until 2030—no obligation until 2030—even though ''they are polluting far more than we are.''

Well, that is just false. First, in 2015, the United States on a per capita basis produced more than double the carbon dioxide emissions of China—more than double—and eight times more than India. Also, contrary to what the Administrator continues to espouse, both China and India have pledged to reach their carbon emissions reduction goals by 2030, which means they are taking steps now—not 5 years from now, not 10 years from now, not 13 years from now—now, to meet those commitments. India is on schedule to be the world's third largest solar market by the end of 2017. In fact, last year, India unveiled the largest solar power facility in the world.

Meanwhile, Chinese leaders have ordered their country's coal companies to cut 1.3 million jobs over the next 5 years. Some of these workers will find jobs in the clean energy sector, which Beijing expects to generate more than 13 million jobs by 2020.

Make no mistake, if the United States cedes its leadership position on climate change, China will be ready and willing to assume that role—our role. In doing so, they will move ahead, and we will fall behind. It is just that simple.

We have a chart here that includes a quote from China's top climate negotiator. He told Reuters about 6 months ago that if Trump abandons efforts to implement the Paris Agreement, ''China's influence and voice are likely to increase in global climate governance, which will then spill over into other areas of global governance and increase China's global standing, power and leadership.''

The Chinese clearly understand that the Paris Agreement affords their country the opportunity to emerge in the 21st century as a clean energy superpower.

I have been there. A year ago, I was there. In the trains they built and the train systems they built, the huge electric buses, all electric buses that I rode, it is clear they know what they are doing, and their intent was to eat our lunch by pursuing this clean sustainable energy approach.

Unfortunately, those in the Trump administration seem to be the only ones who don't recognize that. Some day they will wish they had, and the rest of us will wish we had too. Withdrawing from this pact doesn't put America first, it puts America behind.

You don't have to take my word for it. Just ask our business community. They see the clear benefits for their businesses and for America if we continue to play a lead role in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Over 1,000 American companies and investors, some of which are represented here on this chart, have written to President Trump urging his administration and him to address climate change through the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The businesses, which include Exxon, Starbucks, Apple, General Mills, Walmart, Nike, Morgan Stanley, and BP—just to name a few—this is what all these companies and their leaders said: Failure to embrace the Paris accords ''puts American prosperity at risk. But the right action now will create jobs and boost U.S. competitiveness.''

I have another chart.

We have two letters here. One was written to a new President, President Obama, in 2009. Again, this is a full-page ad.

This is another ad that appeared in the past week to another new President, in this case, President Trump. Interesting enough, back in 2009, a Manhattan businessman named Donald J. Trump agreed with the 1,000 companies I mentioned earlier—the 1,000 companies that said we ought to do something about climate change. We ought to get on board and lead the way. Businessman Donald J. Trump agreed with them and joined CEOs to run an ad in the New York Times urging then-President Obama to ''lead the world by example,'' ahead of the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

In the ad right here, Donald Trump called on President Obama to allow the United States of America ''to serve in modeling the change necessary to protect humanity and our planet.''

Eight years later, the person who signed this letter and joined all these

other CEOs in saying to President Obama: ''Wake up. Let's do something about this climate change stuff. Make sure we are leading the parade''—8 years later, he is not signing the letter. He is the addressee on the letter, from, again, hundreds of CEOs from around the country, and they are urging him to do the very same thing Donald J. Trump had urged Barack Obama to do 8 years earlier. If you ever want to think of something that is ironic, find an example of two full-page ads that sort of represent the term ''irony,'' this is it. This is it.

The companies noted in this second full-page ad that the Paris Agreement provides just the kind of framework we need. So U.S. businesses still recognize that our country leading the world in addressing climate change is the right approach. We might want to ask: Why doesn't our President, Donald Trump, realize that? With the Paris Agreement, the global community rightly recognized that there are challenges bigger than any one State and came together to do what is best for our collective future.

It is not the first time the global community came together for the greater good. In 1944, the world came together at the Convention on International Civil Aviation to regulate international air travel so planes could avoid flying into one another in the not-so-friendly skies of the future.

In 1968, the nonproliferation treaty helped prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and further the goal of disarmament to help keep our world safe.

In 1977, the Chemical Weapons Convention outlawed the production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons, which the world agreed were inhumane.

On these critical issues, the world came together overwhelmingly to do what was in the best interest of humanity rather than the best interest of one single nation, but even these other historic and frankly commonsense agreements don't have as many signers as the Paris Agreement does.

We hear numbers thrown around a lot when we talk about the Paris Agreement, but to put the number of signers in context, let me just say it is nearly the whole world—nearly the whole world.

If you wonder what 195 national flags look like, pretty much the whole world, this chart depicts that. There are two flags down here that have not signed, and one of those is Nicaragua. They didn't sign because they thought the Paris accords didn't go far enough. The other country that didn't sign on is Syria. So, in effect, there is really only one country that has refused to accept the basis of the Paris Agreement, this huge Paris accord, and that one nation is Syria.

Our withdrawing leaves the United States in company with Bashar al-Assad. We will be his wingman. That is not the company we ought to be keeping, and that is not who we are.

When it comes to global challenges such as terrorism and cyber attacks, the United States doesn't sit back and wait for someone else to lead. We lead. America leads the way. We always have. It is part of the fabric of our Nation.

To win our freedom, we took on the mightiest nation on Earth at the time, England, not once but twice, and beat them. A half century later, we survived a bloody Civil War that took hundreds of thousands of lives and left hundreds of thousands more crippled and wounded. After that war, our President was assassinated and his successor, Andrew Johnson, was impeached. Somehow we survived all that and we went on to lead our allies to victory in World War I and World War II. We led our country out of the Great Depression and into victory in the Cold War as well.

Americans should, once again, be leading the world to combat what is likely to be the greatest challenge we will face in our lifetimes. Our children and their children are counting on this, and we should not let them down.

Somebody asked me how long it would take to read a list of the 195 nations that have signed on to the Paris Peace Accords, and I have the names right here. I am not sure I can correctly pronounce all of the names—maybe page 1 and the last page, and I will leave it at that.

It starts out with Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, and Barbados.

That is the first page, and it goes on and on and on.

I will finish up with Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

There are 195 in all. We ought to be in company with the names of all of the countries that are on that list. We should not be in the company of the one that is down here by itself—Syria.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware has 13 minutes remaining until the vote.

Mr. CARPER. Thank you.

IRAN

Mr. President, one of the countries on this list of the 195 subscribing to and signing on to the Paris Agreement was the country of Iran. I want to talk a little bit about Iran in the time that remains.

I came home from church this past Sunday. My wife and I were in the kitchen—we were fixing breakfast—when I turned on the television and watched, I think it was, CNN. They were broadcasting live from Saudi Arabia our President's talking to a large group of national leaders representing Muslim countries from around the world, hosted by Saudi Arabia. The President was giving his speech. He was using a teleprompter, but a lot of Presidents use teleprompters. He was reading a speech off of the teleprompter. As I was listening, I actually thought that this was a pretty good speech. Closer to the end of the speech—I do not know if he went off camera or went off the teleprompter and just did an inaudible or if this was part of the speech—he started talking about Iran and why they are a nemesis to a lot of the world and are not to be trusted—somebody we should not be doing business with or going into any kind of agreements with, even an agreement that causes them not to be able to build a nuclear weapon.

In any event, I thought to myself that there is a real irony here because, as he was going on and berating Iran, they were still counting the votes in Iran from the election that had occurred the day before, which is unlike many of the countries that were represented and that President Trump was addressing in that they do not have elections in those countries. Women do not get to hold office or run for office in many of those countries.

Let me just be the first to say that, clearly, Iran is not a Jeffersonian democracy, and, as some would suggest of late, maybe our credentials are somewhat tarnished on that too. I think of the over 1,600 people who registered to run for President in Iran. There were 1,600 people in Iran who wanted to run for President this year, and Iran's Guardian Council only allowed 6, ultimately, to run.

Iran has never allowed a woman to run for President. Women do hold elected positions. They serve in the parliament and in municipal positions, but none of them has ever run for President. We have had one or two or maybe three.

Iran does not enjoy a free press. International election observers are strictly forbidden, and there are widespread allegations that Iran's 2009 Presidential elections, in which Ahmadinejad was supposedly reelected—I doubt that he was, but there are a lot of people who think those elections were rigged.

In Iran, most of the final decisions rest with the Supreme Leader, at least decisions of consequence, and the Supreme Leader, as we know, is not popularly elected by the people of that country.

Here is what happened in the elections in Iran over the weekend. A lot of people turned out to vote, and they were willing to support a candidate who openly advocates for engagement with the West, including with us. The Supreme Leader of Iran, frankly, did not want President Rouhani to be reelected, but he was, with nearly 60 percent of the vote. In fact, the Supreme Leader, I think, and others urged others to get out of the race so that there would be just a one-on-one against a

hard-line candidate, who was favored by the Supreme Leader, and President Rouhani, who turned out to be favored in the election by almost 60 percent of the voters.

Of the people who voted, I do not know how this breaks out by age, but the country of Iran is a young country. They had their revolution back in the late 1970s. You may recall they captured our Embassy and held our folks hostage during the end of the Carter administration. They created a lot of havoc—not a lot of bloodshed but a lot of havoc—and a lot of bad will from that point in time until almost to this day.

Most of the people who live in Iran today are under the age of 30. A clear majority of them were not alive in 1970 to 1979. They never knew the fellow who led that revolution in Iran in the late 1970s. Most of the people in that country today were born after 1979.

I have talked to any number of Americans, including those who have held senior positions in previous administrations who have gone to Iran in recent years, and they all tell me the same story. They could not believe how welcomed they were by people everywhere—young people and not so young people, but especially by young people. There was a fascination on the part of especially the young people with our country, and there actually appears to be a fair amount of respect and admiration for our country. They would like to have a better relationship with our country.

They turned out and voted for a President. They also voted in municipal elections over the weekend. In the municipal elections, they voted out some sitting mayors of cities like Tehran, which is the capital city. The mayor there was a hard-liner, and, apparently, he has been knocked out of office or will be shortly. There are many other municipal leaders, and a moderate reformist will be succeeding one of the hard-liners.

I do not mean to suggest that all in Iran love us. They do not. The Revolutionary Guard and some of their leadership do not care for us at all. They, frankly, like terrorism and embrace terrorism and would like to continue to foment upheaval and terror in some parts around the country. They are not the future of their country. The future of their country voted last weekend. We have all heard about voting for change. Well, they voted for change, and my hope is that they will get what they voted for.

I think, for us, we have to be smart enough to say that no democracy is perfect—not ours, not theirs—and give them at least a passing grade for effort and see, as we go forward, how we can find ways to work together.

I served in the Vietnam war—three tours in Southeast Asia. I came back at the end of the war and moved from California to Delaware. I got an MBA and became the treasurer, Congressman, Governor, and Senator of Delaware. When I was a Congressman, I led a six-member congressional delegation, including one former U.S. POW, Air Force Capt. Pete Peterson, who spent 6 years in the Hanoi Hilton. We went back to Vietnam a month after I stepped down as a captain in the U.S. Navy. We went back to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos to find out what happened to the thousands of MIAs whose bodies were never recovered. We do not know how they died or where they died or when they died, but we went back and tried to get to the truth. We did so at the behest and encouragement of the George Herbert Walker Bush administration.

We took with us a roadmap to normalize relations between the United States and Vietnam. Lo and behold, we ended up getting to meet their brand new leader, Do Muoi. He was a brand new leader who had only been in office for a week. We presented our roadmap to normalize relations. The six of us—Democrat and Republican Members of the House—had a very emotional meeting with him—a very emotional meeting—and said that these are the things you have to do. If you want to normalize relations with us, give us access to crash sites, the ability to excavate crash sites, the ability to talk to people who live in those areas and communities that are around those crash sites, the ability to go into your war museums, and the ability to go into your military archives and get as much information as we can. We said that we wanted our folks—U.S. folks—to be able to go around the country, to travel around their country. If somebody reports seeing a round-eye, or somebody who might be American, we want to be able to go find him.

A long story short, they did all of the things we asked them to do. Pete Peterson, a Member of our delegation, became the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam. He made sure that the Vietnamese kept to the letter and spirit of that agreement. They did, and we normalized relations.

When I went back to Vietnam last year with President Obama, I met with some of the same people I had met with in August of 1991, who are now leaders of their countries. Do Muoi is still alive. I wrote him a note and sent it to him while I was there.

There are 55,000 American names that are on a wall down by the Lincoln Memorial—55,000 men and women who died in the war, with whom I served—and we have allowed bygones to be bygones with Vietnam. They are not a Jeffersonian democracy, but it turns out that we have worked through our difficulties. They have become a major trading partner with the United States—in fact, a major market. They want to buy things from us, too, like Boeing jets, and a lot of them for a lot of money—billions of dollars.

As it turns out, they and Iran have an airline that is decrepit. We used to joke about an airline in this country that was called Allegheny. We called it ''Agony.'' We had another airline in this country called ''Tree Top.'' In Iran, they do not have an airline to be proud of, as they have very old airplanes and not especially safe airplanes. Like Vietnam, they want to buy our airplanes—a lot of them, for a lot of money.

I would hope that we could be smart enough to say that maybe we should sell to them. We are not going to sell them military equipment. We sell military equipment to Vietnam now, but we are not going to do that kind of thing with Iran. Maybe, if we are smart, we can sell them airplanes and, later on, the parts to the airplanes and, later on, other things as well. We should start small and go from there, as we have with Vietnam.

I will close, but if I could, I want to just say that our President, who has called for the isolation of Iran, also has, basically, praised the actions of President Duterte, of the Philippines, the leader of the Philippines. Do you know what he has done? He has launched a campaign of extrajudicial murders and has killed over 8,000 people.

He has warmly welcomed the leader of Turkey, Erdogan, who may have won or may not have won a tight election that gives him extraordinary powers as the leader of that country.

The President welcomed to the White House Egyptian President El-Sisi, who came to power through military intervention and not an elected government. President Trump has said recently that he would be ''honored'' to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong un, and that is despite the repeated threats from the Korean leader to launch nuclear weapons at the United States and our allies.

Somehow all of those things that this President has done and the things that he has spoken out against, including having any kind of relationship with Iran, does not seem, to me, to be consistent. I will be polite and say it is inconsistent. I think we need to be smarter than that.

With regard to the note that I wrote to the former leader of Vietnam when I was, literally, at the Hanoi Hilton—back at the prison in which JOHN MCCAIN and Pete Peterson were imprisoned—I saw a huge picture on the wall when I was there last year, and I wrote the note and gave it to a young Vietnamese man who knew Do Muoi. I wrote that same African-American proverb: If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Ultimately, we found a way with Vietnam. It took a long time. The war pretty much ended in 1975. It took a long time to get to more normal relations. We finally made it, and they are better for it, and we are too. Someday, the time will come to turn a page, I think, with Iran. We are not there yet, but we are getting a little closer.

For now, I just want to say to those people, though, in that country, who

took the time and made the effort to vote and decided to vote for change and to vote for the reformist—the more moderate form of government—and wanted to be more westward looking than would otherwise be the case: Good for you. My hope in doing that is that you will join us in basically turning down the idea of continuing support for Hezbollah and for terrorism that the other part of Iran and some of the others in leadership are determined to sustain.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill 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.

Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sullivan nomination?

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 135 Ex.]

YEAS—94

Alexander	Franken	Nelson
Baldwin	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Bennet	Grassley	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Reed
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Brown	Heitkamp	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Rounds
Cantwell	Hirono	Rubio
Capito	Hoeven	Sasse
Cardin	Inhofe	Schatz
Carper	Isakson	Schumer
Casey	Johnson	Scott
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Cochran	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	King	Stabenow
Coons	Klobuchar	Strange
Corker	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Manchin	Tillis
Crapo	Markey	Toomey
Cruz	McCain	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Enzi	Merkley	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Wyden
Feinstein	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Murphy	
Flake	Murray	

NAYS—6

Booker	Gillibrand	Sanders
Duckworth	Harris	Warren

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The bill 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 Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Orrin G. Hatch, Roger F. Wicker, Jeff Flake, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, John Hoeven, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, Deb Fischer, Mike Crapo, Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts, Lindsey Graham, John Kennedy, Steve Daines, David Perdue.

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 Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 136 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Strange
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 48.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from New Hampshire.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am deeply concerned by warnings from leading health insurance companies and State insurance commissioners that the Trump administration is now deliberately undermining the Affordable Care Act, leaving insurance plans no choice but to sharply raise premiums or exit the marketplaces.

I understand—I think we all do—that the Affordable Care Act continues to experience stresses and that it needs to be strengthened. There is no doubt about that. I have been saying from the beginning that we need to correct what is not working, that we need to keep what is working, and that we need to work together to change it. Yet, in 2016, there were abundant signs that the law was working and that insurance markets were stabilizing.

For instance, in my State of New Hampshire, health insurance premium increases last year averaged just 2 percent. That is the lowest annual increase in history. Today, it is a very different picture. Because of the efforts of the Trump administration to undermine the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies in New Hampshire and across the country face widespread uncertainty. Many of them are deciding that they have no choice but to protect themselves by drastically increasing premiums.

This week, there was a report in the New Hampshire Union Leader, which is our State's largest newspaper, that premiums in New Hampshire could increase by as much as 44 percent. Now, President Trump says that the Affordable Care Act is ''exploding,'' but let's be clear. If ObamaCare is exploding, as President Trump says, it is because this administration lit the fuse and has been working aggressively to undermine the law.

We can see on this poster what is being reported in other parts of the country. In the LA Times, we see that health insurers and State officials say that Trump is undermining ObamaCare and pushing up rates and that health insurers plan big ObamaCare rate hikes, and they blame Trump.

Perhaps the greatest damage has been done by the administration's refusal to commit to funding cost-sharing subsidies, which are the Federal subsidies that help millions of people pay for coverage. To protect themselves, many insurance companies are preparing two sets of premiums for next year—one premium level if the administration agrees to fund the cost-sharing subsidies and a second, dramatically higher premium level if the administration says no to cost-sharing subsidies.

More broadly, the administration's mixed signals and erratic management of the Affordable Care Act are causing uncertainty in the marketplace. Paul Markovich, the CEO of Blue Shield of

California, has said that health plans are being forced to raise premiums to compensate for all of the turmoil.

It gets worse.

Last week, the Los Angeles Times reported that Seema Verma, the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, shocked a meeting of insurance industry executives by threatening to cut off funding for cost-sharing reductions unless insurers agreed to support the House Republicans' bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act—the bill that was passed several weeks ago.

Washington State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler criticized the administration's actions as playing Russian roulette with Americans' health insurance coverage. He said: ''This has real impact on people's lives.''

One insurance company executive said this about the administration's actions: ''There's a sense that there are no hands on the wheel, and they are just letting the bus careen down the road.''

Physicians and other healthcare professionals live by a time-honored pledge to do no harm, but the Trump administration is pursuing a course that will do tremendous harm to millions of Americans who have gained health coverage for the first time because of the Affordable Care Act. Unless and until Congress repeals the Affordable Care Act, it is the law of the land, and this administration has a responsibility to administer this law with fairness, with rigor, and with competence. The administration certainly does not have the right to take active steps to undermine or even sabotage the law or to threaten insurance companies with such steps if they do not support the repeal of ObamaCare.

It is time for the administration to reconsider its approach to healthcare reform. To date, regrettably, the administration's approach has been highly partisan, with no outreach to Democrats. Instead of a ''do no harm'' approach, instead of taking steps to fill President Trump's pledge that we are going to have insurance for everybody—and he came through New Hampshire on multiple occasions during his primary campaign and during the general election campaign. What he said about health insurance was that we were going to make sure that everybody has it; we are going to make sure that they pay less and that they get quality coverage. The administration now seems determined to take health coverage away from tens of millions of Americans.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the House Republicans' bill—the first one—to repeal the Affordable Care Act would take coverage away from 24 million Americans. Yesterday, the administration proposed a budget that would cut Medicaid by as much as $1.3 trillion over the next decade. That would end coverage for millions of low-income Americans, people with disabilities, and so many of our elderly in nursing homes. In New Hampshire, where we are really on the frontlines of the heroin and opioid epidemic, it would end treatment for many people who are getting treatment for their substance use disorders because of the expansion of Medicaid.

When we think about the people who would be hurt by this, it is unconscionable to hear Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney say: ''There is a certain philosophy wrapped up in the budget, and that is that we are no longer going to measure compassion by the number of programs or the number of people on those programs.'' I disagree with that view. By deliberately taking healthcare coverage from 24 million Americans, it shows the lack of compassion of this administration.

This is not about numbers. He is right about that. This should not be about numbers. This should be about people, about their families, and about what these proposals will do to everyday Americans who will no longer have access to affordable health coverage. Whether they have preexisting conditions or whether they need to get treatment for cancer, for substance use disorders, or for whatever their healthcare needs are, under this proposal, they are not going to be able to afford it. Millions of Americans will not be able to afford it.

I think there is a better way forward. Instead of tearing down the Affordable Care Act and taking health coverage away from people, we should be building on the gains and on the achievements of healthcare reform.

On that score, I want to share an extraordinary letter to the editor that was written by Carol Gulla, of Newmarket, NH.

I am reading her letter:

> I was in good health; why bother with a physical?
>
> That was my mentality for years before the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare). I work for a small nonprofit business, so we don't qualify for group health insurance plans. An annual physical wasn't included in the high premium, high deductible plans that were available to me on the individual health insurance market so they were often a luxury. But it was OK; I felt great! Why bother with doctors?
>
> Because of the Affordable Care Act, last June I went for a routine physical. During [the exam] a lump was discovered in my breast. Ten days later, breast cancer was diagnosed. . . . Fast forward to today. I've just completed my final chemotherapy treatment and my prognosis is very positive. That physical saved my life.
>
> Let me restate that—Obamacare saved my life.
>
> That crucial physical in June would not have happened had it not been an essential preventive service included in all health plans under the ACA. While not perfect, my insurance through the ACA is far better than anything available to me as an individual in the past.

Ms. Gulla's letter continues:

> Up until this point I have been pretty quiet about my diagnosis simply because I didn't want cancer to be the main topic of every conversation I had. But, with the Republican majority in Washington, including Secretary of Health & Human Services Tom Price, promising to repeal the ACA, being quiet is no longer an option. I am being asked to entrust my health and well-being to hollow promises of it will ''be replaced by something better; it will be great.'' Forgive me if I'm skeptical!
>
> This is my life we're talking about! Do not tell me to be patient. Do not tell me to ''wait and see.'' Either outline a . . . plan for improving the Affordable Care Act, or leave my health insurance alone!

She signs it with her name, Carol Gulla, of Newmarket, NH.

I think we need to listen to Carol and to so many other people like her all across America.

Instead of allowing this administration to undermine and even sabotage the Affordable Care Act, we in the Senate need to work together, Democrats and Republicans, to strengthen the parts of the Affordable Care Act that are working in the real world, including Medicaid expansion, and to fix what is not working. According to multiple recent polls that I have seen on this issue, this is what the great majority of Americans want us to do. It is time for us to listen to the American people.

The Affordable Care Act has had a profoundly positive impact all across America, but it needs commonsense repairs and it needs strengthening. Mend it, don't end it, and certainly don't sabotage it. This should be a bipartisan focus in the Senate. I intend to do everything I can to encourage such a bipartisan effort. I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle would be willing to do this important work if they understood how much the American people want to see us do this.

We know that the Affordable Care Act has had positive impacts in each of our States, including giving people peace of mind, knowing they can't be denied coverage based on preexisting conditions. So let's work together. Let's ensure that the Affordable Care Act works even better in the future for all Americans.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from New Hampshire before she leaves the floor for her statement on the Affordable Care Act. I know she made reference to the recent report from the Congressional Budget Office that we just received, and it tells the whole story. It tells us all we need to know about TrumpCare 2—the second attempt by the Republicans to replace the Affordable Care Act. What it tells us in the starkest terms is exactly the reason why the Republicans didn't want to wait around for this analysis.

For the record, the Congressional Budget Office is a nonpartisan agency of the Federal Government that analyzes our great ideas and tells us what is going to happen if they become law. I know this agency pretty well because

when we wrote the Affordable Care Act, we waited and waited and waited, sometimes weeks at a time, until some bright idea that we thought we had was analyzed in the cold reality of healthcare in America. Sometimes they came back and said good idea, and many times they came back and said bad idea.

The Republicans passed TrumpCare 2 in the House about 3 weeks ago and wouldn't wait for the Congressional Budget Office analysis. We thought to ourselves, that is unusual. That is the standard everybody uses in Congress. They wouldn't wait because they knew what was coming, and today it was announced.

This afternoon, here is what the Congressional Budget Office said about the Republican attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Next year, under the Republican plan, 14 million Americans would lose their health insurance. How about that for a starter. That is the starting point of their analysis. Over the next 10 years, 23 million Americans would lose their health insurance. Next year, premiums—the cost of health insurance—would increase 20 percent in the individual market. The CBO affirms that under current law—the Affordable Care Act—the marketplaces are stable. However, under the Republican repeal bill, one-sixth of the population resides in parts of America where the individual market would become unstable beginning in the year 2020.

There will be $834 billion in cuts in Federal Medicaid Programs over the next decade. Do we know what those cuts mean? In my State, half the children born are covered by Medicaid. The mothers get prenatal care so the babies are healthy—paid for by Medicaid. The delivery is paid for by Medicaid. The postnatal care of that little infant is paid for by Medicaid.

That is not the most expensive part of Medicaid in my State and in most States. The most expensive part is for your mom and your grandmother in the nursing home. That is where most of Medicaid money goes. Two-thirds of it goes to those folks in nursing homes who have no other source of income, not to mention the disabled who count on Medicaid.

What the Congressional Budget Office tells us is that the Republican plan is going to devastate Medicaid across the United States. Which of the groups I just mentioned do we think we can toss overboard—babies born to low-income mothers, or the elderly who have no place to turn and have exhausted their savings and are living in nursing homes, or the disabled who need the help of Medicaid on a regular basis? Those are the casualties of this Republican repeal plan, not to mention the fact that the real driving force behind these terrible healthcare decisions is a tax cut for the wealthiest people in America.

This is from the Congressional Budget Office again: $88 billion in tax cuts for the superwealthy and big businesses, including drug companies.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, will my colleague yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Those numbers came out while I was speaking on the floor, because I was talking about the first House-passed bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act. What the Senator from Illinois is telling me is that the numbers for the bill they passed to fix the first bill they couldn't pass are just as bad and in some ways even worse than the original bill.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, through the Chair, in response to the Senator from New Hampshire, they are equally disastrous.

Listen to these quotes from the Congressional Budget Office this afternoon about the Republican repeal plan: ''People who are less healthy, including those with preexisting conditions, would ultimately be unable to purchase comprehensive individual market insurance at premiums comparable to those under current law if they could purchase it at all.''

Listen to this. It goes on to say: ''In particular, out-of-pocket spending on maternity care and mental health and substance abuse services could increase by thousands of dollars in a given year for the individual market enrollees who use those services.''

Let me bring this home to your State. Your State has been devastated—our State has been hurt badly—your State has been devastated by the opioid crisis. I would like the Senator from New Hampshire, if she would, to respond to that by giving us some detail. What they are saying is that the Republican repeal of the Affordable Care Act is going to deny coverage in health insurance for substance abuse treatment for families whose kids are discovered to be on opioids.

I yield through the Chair without yielding the floor to the Senator from New Hampshire to describe her challenge in New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Well, that was going to be my followup question. In New Hampshire, we have the second highest percentage of overdose deaths in the country. We lose more people in New Hampshire to deaths from overdoses of opioids and fentanyl and heroin than we do to car accidents. And an overwhelming percentage of people—over 90 percent—are getting treatment for their substance abuse disorders through the expansion of Medicaid, which has been a bipartisan program in New Hampshire that has covered about 60,000 people, many of whom are getting treatment for substance abuse disorders.

So what the Senator from Illinois is telling me, from the CBO, is that based on the plan that passed the House that Republicans have supported, those people who are getting their treatment—lifesaving treatment for mental health issues and substance abuse disorders—they are going to be kicked off of their plan, and they are not going to have any other option for getting that care.

Mr. DURBIN. That is what the Congressional Budget Office reports.

So we have these discussions on the floor—and the Senator from New Hampshire has been in the middle of them because of her State's experience with opioids—and both parties come together and wring their hands and say: What are we going to do about the opioid-heroin crisis in America? And we have come up with some good ideas. But here we have the Republican effort repealing the Affordable Care Act, which cuts the legs out from under all of our efforts because it takes away from families' Medicaid coverage that they are using for drug treatment, as well as coverage in their health insurance plans.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, if my colleague will yield once more, last year we passed the 21st Century Cures Act, which appropriated $1 billion—$500 million this year and $500 million next year—to address the heroin and opioid epidemic we are having, and in the recent passage of the omnibus bill, we got $700-plus million to help us fight this epidemic. So on the one hand, we are putting money in to address it, and on the other hand, we are taking away the treatment people need by passing a healthcare bill that is going to throw people off their treatment and give them no other option to address their substance use disorders.

Mr. DURBIN. That is exactly what the Congressional Budget Office reports to us.

This afternoon we had a press conference and we invited four or five families to come in with their kids. The theme of the press conference was, what is going to happen if your child has a preexisting condition?

Well, there were some amazing little kids there and some heroic moms and dads telling the story about what happens when you discover that your little infant has a cantaloupe-sized tumor from neuroblastoma and what happens for that family, what happens to that infant. Thank goodness those kids were all standing there smiling. They fought the good fight, and they have to continue to fight it, and each and every one of them is branded as having a preexisting condition. Back in the old days, before the Affordable Care Act, that meant those families were unable to buy health insurance, or if they could buy it, they couldn't afford it because the premiums were too high. So we passed the Affordable Care Act and said: Enough. We are not going to allow you to discriminate against anyone for a preexisting condition.

If you have a spouse with diabetes, if you have somebody in your family who is a cancer survivor, they can't use it against you. They can't discriminate. Now the Congressional Budget Office tells us what is going to happen to those people. We are going back to the bad old days when those families will not only have to stay awake at night

worrying about whether that baby of theirs is going to survive, they are going to stay awake at night also worrying about how in the world they are going to pay for their health insurance.

Is that the Republican answer? Is that Trumpism at work when it comes to healthcare in America? I can't believe the American people voted for that. I can't believe they are saying to our Republican colleagues: We really don't care if our health insurance covers preexisting conditions. Of course they care.

They come back with something called high-risk pools. I am sure the Senator from New Hampshire can remember those. Let me tell you about some of those warnings around swimming pools that say: No diving, the pool is too shallow. Well, the high-risk pools for preexisting conditions are way too shallow. No family with preexisting conditions should dive into those pools because the amount of money provided for by the Republicans in their affordable care repeal would only cover about one out of four families with preexisting conditions. Three out of four families: You are on your own.

Think about that. If you have ever been in a position in life where you are a parent with a sick child and have no health insurance, you will never forget it as long as you live. I know because I have been there. When I was a law student with a little baby who was sick, I had no health insurance. I will never forget it as long as I live.

Why don't the Republicans hear the same message we hear? Why aren't they listening to these families and the struggles they are going through to keep their kids alive? And they come up with a repeal plan that is going to make it exceedingly difficult—in some cases impossible—to provide quality care to these kids and to people with preexisting conditions. That, to me, is not our responsibility.

I go to the conclusion of the Senator from New Hampshire, which I think is the right one. Is the Affordable Care Act perfect? No. It is one of the most important and I think the most giving bills I have ever voted for, but it is far from perfect. We should be sitting down with the other side of the aisle—Republicans and Democrats—not to repeal the Affordable Care Act but to make sure we make the repairs that make a difference.

Each one of us has a list of things we would like to see addressed. The cost of premiums are too high in the individual market. Let's address that directly, and we should. The fact that pharmaceutical drugs don't have any regulation or control in terms of pricing is just plain wrong. And third—I will just put on my agenda—I think every American should have the option of a public option plan like Medicare. You can decide if that is right for you or your family, but a not-for-profit plan based on Medicare should be available to every American no matter where you live. Those are the three things I would put on the table right away. To walk away from coverage for 23 million Americans and to endanger the coverage for those who remain with premiums they can't afford is hardly humane and hardly consistent with American values.

So I thank the Senator from New Hampshire for her contribution in this. We have to get the message out.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. If I could just add one more group of folks who are going to be affected by this bill that passed the House several weeks ago. That is our veterans. We have millions of veterans in this country who get their healthcare through Medicaid. We have asked these folks to put their lives on the line for this country, and now we are talking about taking away the healthcare they depend on.

I was at one of our community mental health centers in New Hampshire last week and met with a number of veterans who get their care through the expansion of Medicaid. They talked about what it means to be able to get care, to be able to go into that community mental health center and work with the veterans outreach coordinator who works with veterans, trying to make sure they get the help they need. If this bill goes forward, PTSD, which affects so many veterans, would be considered a preexisting condition and they wouldn't be able to get health insurance going forward.

This is bill is nothing but mean-spirited. As the Senator said, all of the efforts to save money in the bill are so money can be used to give huge tax breaks to the wealthiest among us. I don't think that is what Americans want. As the Senator says, we need to work with our colleagues. We need to get a good bill that improves the Affordable Care Act, fixes what is not working, and makes it better.

Mr. DURBIN. If I may also say, I agree completely that discriminating against veterans should hardly be the starting point for the reform of our healthcare system.

I want to make this point because I know exactly what the first speech will be from the Republican side of the aisle. This point in the Congressional Budget Office affirms that under current law insurance marketplaces are stable. They are stable. That isn't what you will hear from the other side of the aisle. The other side of the aisle loves to use the phrase ''death spiral,'' that the current healthcare system in America is in a death spiral.

The only death spiral in the current healthcare system is brought on because the Republicans have their hands around the throat of that system and they are choking it. Their sabotage of our current healthcare system is the reason there is uncertainty in the insurance markets. The insurance companies told us that this week: We don't know where you are going in Washington. We don't know what the future will hold. We have an obligation to our shareholders and people who work for us to make sure we protect ourselves. So we are going to hold back in terms of commitment.

So to the Republicans I would say: This is no death spiral. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy to bring down our healthcare system, and shame on those who would do it at the expense of vulnerable populations across America.

I will mention one other group while the Senator from New Hampshire is on the floor. The Illinois Hospital Association roundly opposes this Republican TrumpCare bill. The reason they do is they say it endangers smalltown hospitals—and we have a lot of them in our State—and inner-city hospitals as well. I am sure that is the case in New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Actually, the New Hampshire Hospital Association also opposes the bill for the very same reason. We have hospitals at risk if this bill is passed.

Mr. DURBIN. I am sure, in the Senator's State, like in our State of Illinois, there are larger cities with big hospitals that treat all kinds of cases, but were it not for that safety net of hospitals in small towns, these people living there would drive an extra 50 or 100 miles to get to a hospital and would see the loss of critical services for trauma and emergencies that currently exist with these smalltown hospitals.

According to the Illinois Hospital Association and others, the first casualties of the Republican repeal bill—the first casualties of TrumpCare—it is estimated in Illinois that we will lose 60,000 healthcare jobs at our hospitals because of the Republican approach. How important are these jobs? I will go out on a limb: In most communities, they are the best paying jobs in the community. The men and women who are the doctors and the nurses and the specialists who provide that basic care in these towns, sure, they get compensated better than most, but we want to compensate them and keep them there because without them, people don't have the basic health services they count on.

So from every perspective, whether it is the doctors, the nurses, the pediatricians, substance abuse treatment, hospitals and clinics, the Republican approach to repealing ObamaCare—repealing the Affordable Care Act—is devastating, and the Congressional Budget Office put it in writing today.

I might say, we should close by saying what is happening in the Senate after the House passed this terrible bill, which the Congressional Budget Office told us about. Well, we don't know. It is a mystery. We would have expected that someone in the Senate would have decided: Let's put a bill on the table, let's have an open public hearing, let's have a debate about where we go, and let's make a good, sound decision that is in the best interests of the American families. That is not the case at all.

Instead, the Republican leader in the Senate has chosen 12 or 13 men to sit in

a room outside of the view of the public and to craft an alternative to the terrible bill that passed the House. Nobody has seen it, nobody wants to talk about it. It has not been scored. It has not been debated. That is their idea of reforming healthcare in America. That is not going to work—at least not going to work for the best interests of the families I represent.

If we are going to come together on a bipartisan basis to repair and strengthen the Affordable Care Act, let's do it, but let's do it in the light of day, instead of hiding behind the doors of some room with 13 Senators who have been given this blessing, anointed, to try to come up with a new healthcare system for America. That, to me, is inconsistent with our responsibility—our public responsibility—when it comes to this critical issue.

So I thank the Senator from New Hampshire for her input on this. There will be more to be said.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. There will be. If I could ask one final question because not only is this effort in the Senate happening behind closed doors, but initially it excluded women.

Women are more than 50 percent of this country. We have particular needs when it comes to healthcare. Fortunately, the essential health benefits part of the Affordable Care Act provide requirements for preventive health for women, for mammograms. They cover maternity benefits when you have a baby. They are talking about writing this legislation without taking into consideration the women in the Senate, the women in the country, and what we need to do to make sure we have access to healthcare. That is just unconscionable, added to the fact that it is all being done behind closed doors.

Mr. DURBIN. I agree with that. Also, as the Senator from New Hampshire knows better than anybody, originally being a woman was a preexisting condition.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Absolutely. They want to take us back to that.

Mr. DURBIN. It would disqualify you or raise your premiums because you are a woman. We got rid of that gross discrimination against women when we did the Affordable Care Act. We shouldn't have a similar level of discrimination when it comes to writing any improvement in this Affordable Care Act.

This is a big enough Senate and a big enough place for us to all gather around the table and make sure we do this in the best interests of all Americans, regardless of gender, regardless of background, regardless of where you live. That is the way we should approach something as serious as an item that accounts for $1 of every $6 in the American economy—an item that is literally life and death for families all across Illinois, New Hampshire, and all across the United States.

The Congressional Budget Office said it all today. It is time for us to put Trump 2.0 to rest and try to come up with something which really is befitting this great Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. WARREN. 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. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the nomination of Judge Amul Thapar to serve as a judge on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

It should surprise absolutely no one that Judge Thapar is the second nominee to a Federal court to come up for a vote in this Congress. His nomination comes on the heels of the nomination of now-Justice Neil Gorsuch, an ultraconservative who could not earn enough support to be confirmed under Senate's normal rules, a judge so radical, so controversial that Senate Republicans had to change the Senate rules and lower the vote threshold to force his nomination through the Senate.

Now the Senate is poised to vote on a judge cut from the same cloth. Like Justice Gorsuch, Judge Thapar made the list of 21 acceptable judges that far-right groups drew up and handed to President Trump—judges who would tilt the scales of justice in favor of the rich and the powerful. As in Justice Gorsuch's case, those radical groups are committed to doing whatever it takes to make sure Judge Thapar sits on the Nation's highest courts.

For those groups, the goal is not just to get a few ultraconservative judges on our Federal courts; it is to capture the entire judicial branch. For years, billionaire-funded, rightwing groups have worked hand in hand with Republicans to ensure that our courts advance the interests of the wealthy and powerful over the rights of everyone else. They abused the filibuster to stop fair, mainstream judges from filling vacancies on Federal courts, they slowed the judicial nominations process to a crawl, and they threw the Constitution and Senate precedent out the window by refusing to consider President Obama's Supreme Court nominee. Under their watch, judicial vacancies stacked up and courts became overloaded with cases. Now Republicans and their extremist friends have a President who shares their concern about the interests of the 1 percent, and they are ready to stack our Federal courts with judges who will advance their radical agenda. Judge Thapar is much more than up to the task.

There are many reasons to oppose Judge Thapar's nomination to the Sixth Circuit, from his decisions making it harder for working Americans to get access to the judicial system to his support for sentencing policies that don't make us safer but that exacerbate the problem of mass incarceration. There is a lot to object to, but I want to highlight one area that should concern every person who thinks government should work for all of us; that is, Judge Thapar's stance on money in politics.

For decades, our laws restricted the amount of money that individuals and corporations could pour into the political process. In recent years, Federal courts chipped away at those laws, and then Supreme Court decisions in cases like McCutcheon and Citizens United took a sledgehammer to campaign finance laws, unleashing a flood of dark money into the political system.

There are now dozens of perfectly legal ways for the 1 percent to buy influence and favor: corporate campaign contributions and super pacs, the revolving door between government and the private sector, bought-and-paid-for experts to push alternative facts, armies of lobbyists swarming the Halls of Congress. Their investments have paid off in the form of special breaks, exemptions, deals, riders, subsidies, loopholes, and every other handout industry can imagine. That money—that unaccountable, dark, unlimited money—has fundamentally distorted our democracy.

Judge Thapar would make the problem worse. Judge Thapar believes that actual speech and monetary contributions are basically the same thing. When he had to decide on the constitutionality of a Kentucky rule preventing State judges and judicial candidates from donating to political groups or campaigns, he concluded that the rule was unconstitutional. In his decision, Judge Thapar said: ''There is simply no difference between 'saying' that one supports an organization by using words and 'saying' that one supports an organization by donating money.'' No difference between talking about a candidate and dumping a bucket of money into the candidate's campaign. Wow.

In Judge Thapar's view, the Constitution should protect a billionaire's right to dump unlimited sums of money into the political process to influence the outcome of elections. That is even further than the Supreme Court has gone. As the Sixth Circuit reminded Judge Thapar when it reversed his decision on donations, even the Supreme Court has refused to treat monetary donations as equivalent to direct speech.

The issue of concentrated money in our political system is one that doesn't split down party lines. Americans of all political views cringe at the massive amounts of secret money that slither through our political process. They have seen politicians beholden to the handful of deep-pocketed individuals and giant corporations, and they have seen those politicians turn their backs on the constituents they were elected to represent. That is at the heart of what is wrong in our Nation. Our government should work for everyone, not just for the millionaires and billionaires.

Fighting for a government that is accountable to the people means fighting to reduce the influence of concentrated money and concentrated power in our political system. It is time to take down the sign that says ''government for sale'' that hangs above Washington, DC, and we can start today by rejecting Judge Thapar's nomination to serve on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

AMENDED U.S. SENATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I wish to inform all Senators that on Friday, May 19, 2017, the Committee on Rules and Administration adopted amendments to the U.S. Senate Travel Regulations and corresponding changes to the committee and administrative office staff regulations, which are published as part of the travel regulations. All amendments are effective immediately.

I ask unanimous consent that a summary of these modifications and the text of the amended regulations be printed in the RECORD.

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

SUMMARY OF AMENDED REGULATIONS

U.S. SENATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS

The Committee has modified its travel regulations to provide that any mode of transportation hired for a fee while on official travel or for purposes of interdepartmental transportation, including but not limited to public transportation, is eligible for reimbursement.

The Committee also has modified its travel regulations to align the rules governing rental car reimbursements. The amended regulations provide that staff members may be reimbursed for rental car expenses incurred for purposes of interdepartmental transportation regardless of their duty station.

The amended regulations do not affect or alter the longstanding prohibition on the reimbursement of commuting expenses, and offices continue to be prohibited from obtaining reimbursement of ''no show'' charges associated with official travel and interdepartmental transportation.

COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE STAFF REGULATIONS

The Committee has also amended the Committee and Administrative Office Staff Regulations that are published as part of the Travel Regulations. The reference to ''interdepartmental transportation'' in the section governing the use of petty cash funds has been revised to be consistent with the amended Travel Regulations.

REGULATIONS AND STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The travel regulations herein have been promulgated by the Committee on Rules and Administration pursuant to the authority vested in it by paragraph 1(n)(1)8 of Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate and by section 6503 of Title 2 of the United States Code, the pertinent portions of which provisions are as follows:

Standing Rules of the Senate

Rule XXV

Paragraph 1(n)(1)8

(n)(1) Committee on Rules and Administration, to which committee shall be referred * * * matters relating to the following subjects: * * *

8. Payment of money out of the contingent fund of the Senate or creating a charge upon the same * * *

United States Code

Title 2 Section 6503

Sec. 6503. Payments from contingent fund of Senate

No payment shall be made from the contingent fund of the Senate unless sanctioned by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate * * *.

UNITED STATES SENATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS

Revised by the Committee on Rules and Administration

Effective October 1, 1991 as amended January 1, 1999, as further amended December 7, 2006, October 26, 2007, December 20, 2007, March 27, 2009, and May 19, 2017.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

I. Travel Authorization

A. Only those individuals having an official connection with the function involved may obligate the funds of said function.

B. Funds disbursed by the Secretary of Senate may be obligated by:

1. Members of standing, select, special, joint, policy or conference committees

2. Staff of such committees

3. Employees properly detailed to such committees from other agencies

4. Employees of Members of such committees whose salaries are disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate and employees appointed under authority of section 111 of Public Law 95–94, approved August 5, 1977, when designated as ''ex officio employees'' by the Chairman of such committee. Approval of the reimbursement voucher will be considered sufficient designation.

5. Senators, including staff and nominating board members. (Also individuals properly detailed to a Senator's office under authority of Section 503(b)(3) of P.L. 96–465, approved October 17, 1980.)

6. All other administrative offices, including Officers and staff.

C. An employee who transfers from one office to another on the same day he/she concludes official travel shall be considered an employee of the former office until the conclusion of that official travel.

D. All travel shall be either authorized or approved by the chairman of the committee, Senator, or Officer of the Senate to whom such authority has been properly delegated. The administrative approval authority required will be issued prior to the expenses being incurred and will specify the travel to be undertaken unless circumstances in a particular case prevent such prior approval.

E. Official Travel Authorizations: The General Services Administration, on behalf of the Committee on Rules and Administration, has contracted with several air carriers to provide discount air fares for Members, Officers, and employees of the Senate only when traveling on official business. This status is identifiable to the contracting air carriers by one of the following ways:

1. The use of a government issued travel charge card

2. The use of an ''Official Travel Authorization'' form which must be submitted to the air carrier prior to purchasing a ticket. These forms must be personally approved by the Senator, Committee chairman, or Officer of the Senate under whose authority the travel for official business is taking place. Payment must be made in advance by cash, credit card, check, or money order. The Official Travel Authorization forms are available in the Senate Disbursing Office.

II. Funds for Traveling Expenses

A. Individuals traveling on official business for the Senate will provide themselves with sufficient funds for all current expenses, and are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.

1. Travel Advances

a) Advances to Committees (P.L. 81–118)

(1) Chairmen of joint committees operating from the contingent fund of the Senate, and chairmen of standing, special, select, policy, or conference committees of the Senate, may requisition an advance of the funds authorized for their respective committees.

(a) When any duty is imposed upon a committee involving expenses that are ordered to be paid out of the contingent fund of the Senate, upon vouchers to be approved by the chairman of the committee charged with such duty, the receipt of such chairman for any sum advanced to him[her] or his[her] order out of said contingent fund by the Secretary of the Senate for committee expenses not involving personal services shall be taken and passed by the accounting officers of the Government as a full and sufficient voucher; but it shall be the duty of such chairman, as soon as practicable, to furnish to the Secretary of the Senate vouchers in detail for the expenses so incurred.

(2) Upon presentation of the properly signed statutory advance voucher, the Disbursing Office will make the original advance to the chairman or his/her representative. This advance may be in the form of a check, or in cash, receipted for on the voucher by the person receiving the advance. Under no circumstances are advances to be used for the payment of salaries or obligations, other than petty cash transactions of the committee.

(3) In no case shall a cash advance be paid more than seven (7) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. In no case shall an advance in the form of a check be paid more than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. Requests for advances in the form of a check should be received by the Senate Disbursing Office no less than five (5) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. The amount of the advance then becomes the responsibility of the individual receiving the advance, in that he/she must return the unexpended amount advanced before or shortly after the expiration of the authority under which these funds were obtained.

(Regulations Governing Cash Advances for Official Senate Travel adopted by the Committee on Rules and Administration, effective July 23, 1987, pursuant to S. Res. 258, October 1, 1987, as applicable to Senate committees)

(4) Travel advances shall be made prior to the commencement of official travel in the form of cash, direct deposit, or check. Travel advance requests shall be signed by the Committee Chairman and a staff person designated with signature authority.

(5) Cash: Advances for travel in the form of cash shall be picked up only in the Senate Disbursing Office and will be issued only to the person traveling (photo ID required), with exceptions being made for Members and elected Officers of the Senate. The traveler (or the individual receiving the advance in the case of a travel advance for a Member or elected Officer of the Senate) shall sign the travel advance form to acknowledge receipt of the cash.

(6) In those cases when a travel advance has been paid, every effort should be made by the office in question to submit to the Senate Disbursing Office a corresponding travel voucher within twenty-one (21) days of the conclusion of such official travel.

(7) Travel advances for official Senate travel shall be repaid within 30 days after completion of travel. Anyone with an outstanding advance at the end of the 30 day period will be notified by the Disbursing Office that they must repay within 15 days, or their salary may be garnisheed in order to satisfy their indebtedness to the Federal government.

(8) In those cases when a travel advance has been paid for a scheduled trip which prior to commencement is canceled or postponed indefinitely, the traveler should immediately return the travel advance to the Senate Disbursing Office.

(9) No more than two (2) travel advances per traveler may be outstanding at any one time.

(10) The amount authorized for each travel advance should not exceed the estimated total of official out-of-pocket expenses for the trip in question. The minimum travel advance that can be authorized for the official travel expenses of a Committee Chairman and his/her staff is $200.

(11) The aggregate total of travel advances for committees shall not exceed $5,000, unless otherwise authorized by prior approval of the Committee on Rules and Administration.

b) Advances to Senators and their staffs (2 U.S.C. 58(j))

(Regulations for Travel Advances for Senators and Their Staffs adopted by the Committee on Rules and Administration, effective April 20, 1983, pursuant to P.L. 97–276)

(1) Travel advances from a Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account must be authorized by that Senator for himself/herself as well as for his/her staff. Staff is defined as those individuals whose salaries are funded from the Senator's account. An employee in the Office of the President Pro Tempore, the Deputy President Pro Tempore, the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader, the Majority Whip, the Minority Whip, the Secretary for the Conference of the Majority, or the Secretary for the Conference of the Minority shall be considered an employee in the office of the Senator holding such office.

(2) Advances shall only be used to defray official travel expenses . . . .

(3) Travel advances shall be made prior to the commencement of official travel in the form of cash, direct deposit, or check. Travel advance requests shall be signed by the Member and a staff person designated with signature authority.

(4) Cash: Advances in the form of cash shall be picked up only in the Senate Disbursing Office and will be issued only to the person traveling (photo ID required), with exceptions being made for Members and elected Officers of the Senate. The traveler (or the individual receiving the advance in the case of a travel advance for a Member or elected Officer of the Senate) will sign the travel advance form to acknowledge receipt of the cash.

(5) In no case shall a travel advance in the form of cash be paid more than seven (7) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. In no case shall an advance in the form of a direct deposit or check be paid more than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. Requests for advances in the form of a direct deposit or check should be received by the Senate Disbursing Office no less than five (5) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel.

(6) In those cases when a travel advance has been paid, every effort should be made by the office in question to submit to the Senate Disbursing Office a corresponding travel voucher within twenty-one (21) days of the conclusion of such official travel.

(7) Travel advances for official Senate travel shall be repaid within 30 days after completion of travel. Anyone with an outstanding advance at the end of the 30 day period will be notified by the Senate Disbursing Office that they must repay within 15 days, or their salary may be garnisheed in order to satisfy their indebtedness to the Federal government.

(8) In those instances when a travel advance has been paid for a scheduled trip which prior to commencement is canceled or postponed indefinitely, the traveler in question should immediately return the travel advance to the Senate Disbursing Office.

(9) The amount authorized for each travel advance should not exceed the estimated total of official out-of-pocket travel expenses for the trip in question. The minimum travel advance that can be authorized for the official travel expenses of a Senator and his/her staff is $200. No more than two (2) travel advances per traveler may be outstanding at any one time.

(10) The aggregate total of travel advances per Senator's office shall not exceed 10% of the expense portion of the Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account, or $5,000, whichever is greater.

c) Advances to Administrative Offices of the Senate

(Regulations Governing Cash Advances for Official Senate Travel, adopted by the Committee on Rules and Administration, effective July 23, 1987, pursuant to S. Res. 258, October 1, 1987, as amended, as applicable to Senate administrative offices)

(1) Travel advances shall be made prior to the commencement of official travel in the form of cash, direct deposit, or check. Travel advance requests shall be signed by the applicable Officer of the Senate and a staff person designated with signature authority.

(2) Cash: Advances in the form of cash shall be picked up only in the Senate Disbursing Office and will be issued only to the person traveling (photo ID required), with exceptions being made for Members and elected Officers of the Senate. The traveler (or the individual receiving the advance in the case of a travel advance for a Member or elected Officer of the Senate) will sign the travel advance form to acknowledge receipt of the cash.

(3) In no case shall a travel advance be paid more than seven (7) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. In no case shall an advance in the form of a direct deposit or check be paid more than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. Requests for advances in the form of a direct deposit or check should be received by the Senate Disbursing Office no less than five (5) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel.

(4) In those cases when a travel advance has been paid, every effort should be made by the office in question to submit to the Senate Disbursing Office a corresponding travel voucher within twenty-one (21) days of the conclusion of such official travel.

(5) Travel advances for official Senate travel shall be repaid within 30 days after completion of travel. Anyone with an outstanding advance at the end of the 30 day period will be notified by the Disbursing Office that they must repay within 15 days, or their salary may be garnisheed in order to satisfy their indebtedness to the Federal government.

(6) In those instances when a travel advance has been paid for a scheduled trip which prior to commencement is canceled or postponed indefinitely, the traveler in question should immediately return the travel advance to the Senate Disbursing Office.

(7) The amount authorized for each travel advance should not exceed the estimated total of official out-of-pocket travel expenses for the trip in question. The minimum travel advance that can be authorized for the official travel expenses of a Senator Officer and his/her staff is $200. No more than two (2) travel advances per traveler may be outstanding at any one time.

d) Office of the Secretary of the Senate (2 U.S.C. 61a–9a)

(1) . . . The Secretary of the Senate is authorized to advance, with his discretion, to any designated employee under his jurisdiction, such sums as may be necessary, not exceeding $1,000, to defray official travel expenses in assisting the Secretary in carrying out his duties . . .

e) Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate (2 U.S.C. 61f–1a)

(1) For the purpose of carrying out his duties, the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate is authorized to incur official travel expenses during each fiscal year not to exceed sums made available for such purpose under appropriations Acts. With the approval of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate and in accordance with such regulations as may be promulgated by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the Secretary of the Senate is authorized to advance to the Sergeant at Arms or to any designated employee under the jurisdiction of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, such sums as may be necessary to defray official travel expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper. The receipt of any such sum so advanced to the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper or to any designated employee shall be taken and passed by the accounting officers of the Government as a full and sufficient voucher; but it shall be the duty of the traveler, as soon as practicable, to furnish to the Secretary of the Senate a detailed voucher of the expenses incurred for the travel to which the sum was so advanced, and make settlement with respect to such sum. Payments under this section shall be made from funds included in the appropriations account, within the contingent fund of the Senate, for the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate, upon vouchers approved by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS FOR TRAVEL ADVANCES FOR THE OFFICE OF THE SENATE SERGEANT AT ARMS)

(a) GENERAL—With the written approval of the Sergeant at Arms or designee, advances from the contingent expense appropriation account for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms may be provided to the Sergeant at Arms or the Sergeant at Arms' staff to defray official travel expenses, as defined by the U. S. Senate Travel Regulations. Staff is defined as those individuals whose salaries are funded by the line item within the ''Salaries, Officers, and Employees'' appropriation account for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms.

(b) FORMS—Travel advance request forms shall include the date of the request, the name of the traveler, the dates of the official travel, the intended itinerary, the authorizing signature of the Sergeant at Arms or his designee, and a staff person designated with signature authority.

(c) PAYMENT OF ADVANCES—

(i) Travel advances shall be paid prior to the commencement of official travel in the form of cash, direct deposit, or check.

(ii) Advances in the form of cash shall be picked up only in the Senate Disbursing Office and will be issued only to the person traveling (photo ID required), with exceptions being made for Members and elected Officers of the Senate. The traveler (or the individual receiving the advance in the case of a travel advance for a Member or elected Officer of the Senate) will sign the travel advance form to acknowledge receipt of the cash.

(iii) In no case shall a travel advance in the form of cash be paid more than seven (7) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel. In no case shall a travel advance in the form of a direct deposit or check be paid more than fourteen (14) days prior to the commencement of official travel. Requests for travel advances in the form of a direct deposit or check should be received by the Senate Disbursing Office no less than five (5) calendar days prior to the commencement of official travel.

(d) REPAYMENT OF ADVANCES—

(i) The total of the expenses on a travel voucher shall be offset by the amount of the corresponding travel advance, providing for the payment (or repayment) of the difference between the outstanding advance and the total of the official travel expenses.

(ii) In those cases when a travel advance has been paid, every effort should be made to submit to the Senate Disbursing Office a corresponding travel voucher within twenty-one (21) days of the conclusion of such official travel.

(iii) Travel Advances for official Senate travel shall be repaid within 30 days after completion of travel. Anyone with an outstanding travel advance at the end of the 30 day period will be notified by the Senate Disbursing Office that they must repay within 15 days, or their salary may be garnisheed in order to satisfy their indebtedness to the Federal Government.

(iv) In those instances when a travel advance has been paid for a scheduled trip which prior to commencement is cancelled or postponed indefinitely, the traveler in question should immediately return the travel advance to the Senate Disbursing Office.

(e) LIMITS—

(i) To minimize the payment of travel advances, whenever possible, travelers are expected to utilize the corporate and individual travel cards approved by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

(ii) The amount authorized for each travel advance should not exceed the estimated total of official out-of-pocket travel expenses for the trip in question.

(iii) The minimum travel advance that can be authorized for official travel expenses is $200. No more than two (2) cash advances per traveler may be outstanding at any one time.

2. Government Travel Plans

a) Government Charge Cards

(1) Individual government charge cards authorized by the General Services Administration and approved by the Committee on Rules and Administration are available to Members, Officers, and employees of the Senate for official travel expenses.

(a) The employing Senator, chairman, or Officer of the Senate should authorize only those staff who are or will be frequent travelers. The Committee on Rules and Administration reserves the right to cancel the annual renewal of the card if the employee has not traveled on official business during the previous year.

(b) All reimbursable travel expenses may be charged to these accounts including but not limited to per diem expenses and incidentals. Direct pay vouchers to the charge card vendor (currently Bank of America) may be submitted for the Airfare, train, and bus tickets charged to this account. All other travel charges on the account must be paid to the traveler for him/her to personally reimburse the charge card vendor.

(c) Timely payment of these Individually Billed travel accounts is the responsibility of the cardholder. The General Services Administration contract requires payment to the account within 60 days before suspension is enforced on the account. The account is cancelled and the cardholder's credit is revoked when a past due balance is carried on the card for 120 days.

(2) One Centrally Billed government charge account authorized by the General Services Administration and approved by the Committee on Rules and Administration are available to each Member, Committee, and Administrative Office for official transportation expenses in the form of airfare, train, and bus tickets, and rental cars.

(a) Direct pay vouchers to the charge card vendor (currently Bank of America) may be submitted for the airfare, train, and bus tickets, and rental car expenses charged to this account.

(b) Other transportation costs, per diem expenses, and incidentals are not authorized charges for these accounts unless expressly authorized by these regulations or through prior approval from the Committee on Rules and Administration.

(c) Timely payment of these Centrally Billed travel accounts is the responsibility of the cardholder, usually the Administrative Director or Chief Clerk of the office. The General Services Administration contract requires payment to the account within 60 days before suspension is enforced on the account. The account is cancelled and the cardholder's credit is revoked when a past due balance is carried on the card for 120 days.

(1) A centrally billed account may be established through the approved Senate vendor (currently the Combined Airlines Ticket Office (CATO)) and will be charged against an account number issued to each designated office; there are no charge cards issued for such an account.

III. Foreign Travel

A. Reimbursement of foreign travel expenses is not authorized from the contingent fund of Member offices.

B. Committees, including all standing, select, and special committees of the Senate and all joint committees of the Congress whose funds are disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate, are authorized funds for foreign travel from their committee budget and through S. Res. 179, 95–1, notwithstanding Congressional Delegations which are authorized foreign travel funds under the authority of the Mutual Security Act of 1954 (22 U.S.C. 1754).

C. (Restrictions)—amendment to Rule XXXIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate, pursuant to S. Res. 80, agreed to January 28, 1987.

1. (a) Unless authorized by the Senate (or by the President of the United States after an adjournment sine die), no funds from the United States Government (including foreign currencies made available under section 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954 (22 U.S.C. 1754(b), as amended) shall be received by any Member of the Senate whose term will expire at the end of a Congress after—

(1) the date of the general election in which his successor is elected; or

(2) in the case of a Member who is not a candidate in such general election, the earlier of the date of such general election or the adjournment sine die of the second regular session of that Congress.

(b) The travel restrictions provided by subparagraph (a) with respect to a Member of the Senate whose term will expire at the end of a Congress shall apply to travel by—

(1) any employee of the Member;

(2) any elected Officer of the Senate whose employment will terminate at the end of a Congress; and

(3) any employee of a committee whose employment will terminate at the end of a Congress.

2. No Member, Officer, or employee engaged in foreign travel may claim payment or accept funds from the United States Government (including foreign currencies made available under section 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954 (22 U.S.C. 1754(b)) for any expense for which the individual has received reimbursement from any other source; nor may such Member, Officer, or employee receive reimbursement for the same expense more than once from the United States Government. No Member, Officer, or employee shall use any funds furnished to him/her to defray ordinary and necessary expenses of foreign travel for any purpose other than the purpose or purposes for which such funds were furnished.

3. A per diem allowance provided a Member, Officer, or employee in connection with foreign travel shall be used solely for lodging, food, and related expenses and it is the responsibility of the Member, Officer, or employee receiving such an allowance to return to the United States Government that portion of the allowance received which is not actually used for necessary lodging, food, and related expenses.

IV. Reimbursable Expenses: Travel expenses (i.e., transportation, lodging, meals and incidental expenses) which will be reimbursed are limited to those expenses essential to the transaction of official business while away from the official station or post of duty.

A. Member Duty Station(s): The official duty station of Senate Members shall be considered to be the metropolitan area of Washington, D.C.

1. During adjournment sine die or the August adjournment/recess period, the usual place of residence in the home state, as certified for purposes of official Senate travel, shall also be considered a duty station.

2. Each Member shall certify in writing at the beginning of each Congress to the Senate Disbursing Office his/her usual place of residence in the home state; such certification document shall include a statement that the Senator has read and agrees to the pertinent travel regulations on permissible reimbursements.

3. For purposes of this provision, ''usual place of residence'' in the home state shall encompass the area within thirty-five (35) miles of the residence (by the most direct route). If a Member has no ''usual place of residence'' in his/her home state, he/she may designate a ''voting residence,'' or any other ''legal residence,'' pursuant to state law (including the area within thirty-five (35) miles of such residence), as his/her duty station.

B. Officer and Employee Duty Station

1. In the case of an officer or employee, reimbursement for official travel expenses other than interdepartmental transportation shall be made only for trips which begin and end in Washington, D.C., or, in the case of an employee assigned to an office of a Senator in the Senator's home state, on trips which begin and end at the place where such office is located.

2. Travel may begin and/or end at the Senate traveler's residence when such deviation from the duty station locale is more advantageous to the government.

3. For purposes of these regulations, the ''duty station'' shall encompass the area within thirty five (35) miles from where the Senator's home state office or designated duty station is located.

C. No employee of the Senate, relative or supervisor of the employee may directly benefit monetarily from the expenditure of appropriated funds which reimburse expenses associated with official Senate travel. Therefore, reimbursements are not permitted for mortgage payments, or rental fees associated with any type of leasehold interest.

D. A duty station for employees, other than Washington, D.C., may be designated by Members, Committee Chairmen, and Officers of the Senate upon written designation of such station to the Senate Disbursing Office. Such designation shall include a statement that the Member or Officer has read and agrees to the pertinent travel regulations on permissible reimbursements. The duty station may be the city of the office location or the city of residence.

E. For purposes of these regulations, the metropolitan area of Washington, D.C., shall be defined as follows:

1. The District of Columbia
2. Maryland Counties of
a) Charles
b) Montgomery
c) Prince Georges
3. Virginia Counties of
a) Arlington
b) Fairfax
c) Loudoun
d) Prince William
4. Virginia Cities of
a) Alexandria
b) Fairfax
c) Falls Church
d) Manassas
e) Manassas Park
5. Airport locations of
a) Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport
b) Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport
c) Washington Dulles International Airport

F. When the legislative business of the Senate requires that a Member be present, then the round trip actual transportation expenses incurred in traveling from the city within the United States where the Member is located to Washington, D.C., may be reimbursed from official Senate funds.

G. Any deviation from this policy will be considered on a case by case basis upon the written request to, and approval from, the Committee on Rules and Administration.

V. Travel Expense Reimbursement Vouchers

A. All persons authorized to travel on official business for the Senate should keep a memorandum of expenditures properly chargeable to the Senate, noting each item at the time the expense is incurred, together with the date, and the information thus accumulated should be made available for the proper preparation of travel vouchers which must be itemized on an official expense summary report and stated in accordance with these regulations. The official expense summary report form is available at the Senate Disbursing Office or through the Senate Intranet.

B. Computer generated vouchers should be submitted with a signed original. Every travel voucher must show in the space provided for such information on the voucher form the dates of travel, the official travel itinerary, the value of the transportation, per diem expenses, incidental expenses, and conference/training fees incurred.

C. Travel vouchers must be supported by receipts for expenses in excess of $50. In addition, the Committee on Rules and Administration reserves the right to request additional clarification and/or certification upon the audit of any expense seeking reimbursement from the contingent fund of the Senate regardless of the expense amount.

D. When presented independently, credit card receipts such as VISA, MASTER CHARGE, or DINERS CLUB, etc. are not acceptable documentation for lodging. If a hotel bill is lost or misplaced, then the credit card receipt accompanied by a certifying letter from the traveler to the Financial Clerk of the Senate will be considered necessary documentation. Such letter must itemize the total expenses in support of the credit card receipt.

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

I. Common Carrier Transportation and Accommodations

A. Transportation includes all necessary official travel on railroads, airlines, helicopters, public transportation, taxicabs or other mode of transportation hired for a fee, and other usual means of conveyance. Transportation may include fares and such expenses incidental to transportation such as but not limited to baggage transfer. When a claim is made for common carrier transportation obtained with cash, the travel voucher must show the amount spent, including Federal transportation tax, and the mode of transportation used.

1. Train Accommodations

a) Sleeping-car accommodations: The lowest first class sleeping accommodations available shall be allowed when night travel is involved.

When practicable, through sleeping accommodations should be obtained in all cases where more economical to the Senate.

b) Parlor-car and coach accommodations: One seat in a sleeping or parlor car will be allowed. Where adequate coach accommodations are available, coach accommodations should be used to the maximum extent possible, on the basis of advantage to the Senate, suitability and convenience to the traveler, and nature of the business involved.

2. Airplane Accommodations

a) First-class and air-coach accommodations: It is the policy of the Senate that persons who use commercial air carriers for transportation on official business shall use less than first-class accommodations instead of those designated first-class with due regard to efficient conduct of Senate business and the travelers' convenience, safety, and comfort.

b) Use of United States-flag air carriers: All official air travel shall be performed on United States-flag air carriers except where travel on other aircraft (1) is essential to the official business concerned, or (2) is necessary to avoid unreasonable delay, expense, or inconvenience.

B. Change in Travel Plans: When a traveler finds he/she will not use accommodations which have been reserved for him/her, he/she must release them within the time limits specified by the carriers. Likewise, where transportation service furnished is inferior to that called for by a ticket or where a journey is terminated short of the destination specified, the traveler must report such facts to the proper official. Failure of travelers to take such action may subject them to liability for any resulting losses.

1. ''No show'' charges, if incurred by Members or staff personnel in connection with official Senate travel, shall not be considered payable or reimbursable from the contingent fund of the Senate.

2. Senate travelers exercising proper prudence can make timely cancellations when necessary in order to avoid ''no show'' assessments.

3. A Member shall be permitted to make more than one reservation on scheduled flights with participating airlines when such action assists the Member in conducting his/her official business.

C. Compensation Packages: In the event that a Senate traveler is denied passage or gives up his/her reservation due to overbooking on transportation for which he/she held a reservation and this results in a payment of any rebate, this payment shall not be considered as a personal receipt by the traveler, but rather as a payment to the Senate, the agency for which and at whose expense the travel is being performed.

1. Such payments shall be submitted to the appropriate individual for the proper disposition when the traveler submits his/her expense account.

2. Through fares, special fares, commutation fares, excursion, and reduced-rate round trip fares should be used for official travel when it can be determined prior to the start of a trip that any such type of service is practical and economical to the Senate.

3. Round-trip tickets should be secured only when, on the basis of the journey as planned, it is known or can be reasonably anticipated that such tickets will be utilized.

D. Ticket Preparation Fees: Each Chairman, Senator, or Officer of the Senate may, at his/her discretion, authorize in extenuating circumstances the reimbursement of penalty fees associated with the cancellation of through fares, special fares, commutation fares, excursion, reduced-rate round trip fares and fees for travel arrangements, provided that reimbursement of such fees does not exceed the rates prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

E. Frequent Flyer Miles: Travel promotional awards (e.g. free travel, travel discounts, upgrade certificates, coupons, frequent flyer miles, access to carrier club facilities, and other similar travel promotional items) obtained by a Member, officer or employee of the Senate while on official travel may be utilized for personal use at the discretion of the Member or officer pursuant to this section.

1. Travel Awards may be retained and used at the sole discretion of the Member or officer only if the Travel Awards are obtained under the same terms and conditions as those offered to the general public and no favorable treatment is extended on the basis of the Member, officer or employee's position with the Federal Government.

2. Members, officers and employees may only retain Travel Awards for personal use when such Travel Awards have been obtained at no additional cost to the Federal Government. It should be noted that any fees assessed in connection with the use of Travel Awards shall be considered a personal expense of the Member, officer or employee and under no circumstances shall be paid for or reimbursed from official funds.

3. Although this section permits Members, officers and employees of the Senate to use Travel Awards at the discretion of the Member or officer, the Committee encourages the use of such Travel Awards (whenever practicable) to offset the cost of future official travel.

F. Indirect Travel: In case a person, for his/her own convenience, travels by an indirect

route or interrupts travel by direct route, the extra expense will be borne by the traveler. Reimbursement for expenses shall be allowed only on such charges as would have been incurred by the official direct route. Personal travel should be noted on the traveler's expense summary report when it interrupts official travel.

G. Miscellaneous Transportation During Official Travel: The cost of public transportation, taxicabs, or other mode of transportation hired for a fee in connection with official travel will be allowed as an official transportation expense.

H. Dual Purpose Travel: Dual purpose travel occurs when a Senator, staffer, or other official traveler conducts both Senatorial office business and Committee office business during the same trip. The initial point at which official business is conducted will determine the fund which will be charged for travel expenses from and to Washington, D.C. Examples include:

1. If committee business is conducted at the first stop in the trip, travel expenses from Washington, D.C., to said point and return will be chargeable to the committee's funds. Additional travel expenses from said point to other points in the United States, incurred by reason of conducting senatorial business, will be charged to the Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account.

2. If senatorial business is conducted at the first stop in the trip, travel expenses from Washington, D.C., to said point and return will be chargeable to the Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account. Committee funds will be charged with any additional travel expenses incurred for the purpose of performing committee business.

I. Interrupted Travel: If a traveler interrupts official travel for personal business, the traveler may be reimbursed for transportation expenses incurred which are less than or equal to the amount the traveler would have been reimbursed had he/she not interrupted travel for personal business. Likewise, if a traveler departs from or returns to a city other than the traveler's duty station or residence for personal business, then the traveler may be reimbursed for transportation expenses incurred which are less than or equal to the amount the traveler would have been reimbursed had the witness departed from and returned to his/her duty station or residence.

II. Baggage

A. The term ''baggage'' as used in these regulations means Senate property and personal property of the traveler necessary for the purposes of the official travel.

B. Baggage in excess of the weight or of size greater than carried free by transportation companies will be classed as excess baggage. Where air-coach or air-tourist accommodations are used, transportation of baggage up to the weight carried free on first-class service is authorized without charge to the traveler; otherwise excess baggage charges will be an allowable expense.

C. Necessary charges for the transfer of baggage will be allowed. Charges for the storage of baggage will be allowed when such storage was solely on account of official business. Charges for porters and checking baggage at transportation terminals will be allowed.

III. Use of Conveyances: When authorized by the employing Senator, Chairman, or Officer of the Senate, certain conveyances may be used when traveling on official Senate business. Specific types of conveyances are privately owned, special, and private airplane.

A. Privately Owned

1. Chairmen of committees, Senators, Officers of the Senate, and employees, regardless of subsistence status and hours of travel, shall, whenever such mode of transportation is authorized or approved as more advantageous to the Senate, be paid the appropriate mileage allowance in lieu of actual expenses of transportation. This amount should not exceed the maximum amount authorized by statute for use of privately owned motorcycles, automobiles, or airplanes, when engaged in official business within or outside their designated duty stations. It is the responsibility of the office to fix such rates, within the maximum, as will most nearly compensate the traveler for necessary expenses.

2. In addition to the mileage allowance there may be allowed reimbursement for the actual cost of automobile parking fees (except parking fees associated with commuting); ferry fees; bridge, road, and tunnel costs; and airplane landing and tie-down fees.

3. When transportation is authorized or approved for motorcycles or automobiles, mileage between points traveled shall be certified by the traveler. Such mileage should be in accordance with the Standard Highway Mileage Guide. Any substantial deviations shall be explained on the reimbursement voucher.

4. In lieu of the use of taxicab, payment on a mileage basis at a rate not to exceed the maximum amount authorized by statute will be allowed for the round-trip mileage of a privately owned vehicle used in connection with an employee going from either his/her place of abode or place of business to a terminal or from a terminal to either his/her place of abode or place of business: Provided, that the amount of reimbursement for round-trip mileage shall not in either instance exceed the taxicab fare for a one-way trip between such applicable points, notwithstanding the obligations of reasonable schedules.

5. Parking Fees: Parking fees for privately owned vehicles may be incurred in the duty station when the traveler is engaged in interdepartmental transportation or when the traveler is leaving their duty station and entering into a travel status. The fee for parking a vehicle at a common carrier terminal, or other parking area, while the traveler is away from his/her official station, will be allowed only to the extent that the fee, plus the allowable mileage reimbursement, to and from the terminal or other parking area, does not exceed the estimated cost for use of a taxicab to and from the terminal.

6. Mileage for use of privately owned airplanes shall be certified from airway charts issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, and will be reported on the reimbursement voucher and used in computing payment. If a detour was necessary due to adverse weather, mechanical difficulty, or other unusual conditions, the additional air mileage may be included in the mileage reported on the reimbursement voucher and, if included, it must be explained.

7. Mileage shall be payable to only one of two or more employees traveling together on the same trip and in the same vehicle, but no deduction shall be made from the mileage otherwise payable to the employee entitled thereto by reason of the fact that other passengers (whether or not Senate employees) may travel with him/her and contribute in defraying the operating expenses. The names of Senate Members or employees accompanying the traveler must be stated on the travel voucher.

8. When damages to a privately owned vehicle occur due to the negligent or wrongful act or omission of any Member, Officer, or employee of the Senate while acting within the scope of his/her employment, relief may be sought under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

B. Special

1. General:

a) The hire of boat, automobile, aircraft, or other conveyance will be allowed if authorized or approved as advantageous to the Senate whenever the Member or employee is engaged on official business outside his/her designated duty station.

b) Where two or more persons travel together by means of such special conveyance, that fact, together with the names of those accompanying him/her, must be stated by each traveler on his/her travel voucher and the aggregate cost reimbursable will be subject to the limitation stated above.

c) If the hire of a special conveyance includes payment by the traveler of the incidental expenses of gasoline or oil, rent of garage, hangar, or boathouse, subsistence of operator, ferriage, tolls, operator waiting time, charges for returning conveyances to the original point of hire, etc., the same should be first paid, if practicable, by the person furnishing the accommodation, or his/her operator, and itemized in the bill.

2. Rental Cars:

a) Reimbursements for rental of special conveyances will be limited to the cost applicable to a conveyance of a size necessary for a single traveler regardless of the number of authorized travelers transported by said vehicle, unless the use of a larger class vehicle on a shared cost basis is specifically approved in advance by the Committee on Rules and Administration, or the form 'Request for a Waiver of the Travel Regulations' is submitted with the voucher, and found in order upon audit by the Rules Committee.

b) For administrative purposes, reimbursement may be payable to only one of two or more Senate travelers traveling together on the same trip and in the same vehicle.

c) Government Rate: In connection with the rental of an automobile for the use in conducting Senate business, it should be noted that the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO), a division of the Department of Defense, arranges rental car agreements for the government.

(1) These negotiated car rental rates are for federal employees traveling on official business and include unlimited mileage, plus full comprehensive and collision coverage (CDW) on rented vehicles at no cost to the traveler.

(2) For guidance on rate structure and the companies participating in these rate agreements, call the approved Senate vendor (currently the Combined Airline Ticket Office (CATO)).

(3) Individuals traveling on behalf of the United States Senate should use these companies to the maximum extent possible since these agreements provide full coverage with no extra fee. The Senate will not pay for separate insurance charges; therefore, any individuals who choose to use non-participatory car rental agencies may be personally responsible for any damages or liability accrued while on official Senate business.

d) Insurance: In connection with the rental of vehicles from commercial sources, the Senate will not pay or reimburse for the cost of the loss/damage waiver (LDW), collision damage waiver (CDW) or collision damage insurance available in commercial rental contracts for an extra fee.

(1) The waiver or insurance referred to is the type offered a renter to release him/her from liability for damage to the rented vehicle in amounts up to the amount deductible on the insurance included as part of the rental contract without additional charge.

(2) The cost of personal accident insurance is a personal expense and is not reimbursable.

(3) Accidents While on Official Travel: Collision damage to a rented vehicle, for which

the traveler is liable while on official business, will be considered an official travel expense of the Senate up to the deductible amount contained in the rental contract. Such claims shall be considered by the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate on a case by case basis and, when authorized, settled from the contingent fund of the Senate under the line item—Reserve for Contingencies. This is consistent with the long-standing policy of the government to self-insure its own risks of loss or damage to government property and the liability of government employees for actions within the scope of their official duties.

(4) However, when damages to a rented vehicle occurs due to the negligent or wrongful act or omission of any Member, Officer, or employee of the Senate while acting within the scope of his/her employment, relief may be sought under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

3. Charter Aircraft:

a) Reimbursements for charter aircraft will be limited to the charges for a twin-engine, six seat plane, or comparable aircraft. Charter of aircraft may be allowed notwithstanding the availability of commercial facilities, if such commercial facilities are not such that reasonable schedules may be kept. When charter aircraft if used, an explanation and detail of the size of the aircraft, i.e., seating capacity and number of engines, shall be provided on the face of the voucher.

b) In the event charter facilities are not available at the point of departure, reimbursement for charter from nearest point of such availability to the destination and return may be allowed.

c) When a charter aircraft larger than a twin-engine, six seat plane is used, the form 'Request for a Waiver of the Travel Regulations' is submitted with the voucher.

C. Corporate/Private Aircraft: Reimbursement of official expenses for the use of a corporate or private aircraft is allowable from the contingent fund of the Senate provided the traveler complies with the prohibitions, restrictions, and authorizations specified in these regulations. Moreover, pursuant to the Ethics Committee Interpretive Ruling 444, excess campaign funds may be used to defray official expenses consistent with the regulations promulgated by the Federal Election Commission.

1. An amendment to Rule XXXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, paragraph 1(c)(1)(C), enacted September 14, 2007, pursuant to P.L. 110–81, states:

(C)(i)Fair market value for a flight on an aircraft described in item (ii) shall be the pro rata share of the fair market value of the normal and usual charter fare or rental charge for a comparable plane of comparable size, as determined by dividing such cost by the number of Members, officers, or employees of Congress on the flight.

(ii)A flight on an aircraft described in this item is any flight on an aircraft that is not—

(I) operated or paid for by an air carrier or commercial operator certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration and required to be conducted under air carrier safety rules; or

(II) in the case of travel which is abroad, an air carrier or commercial operator certificated by an appropriate foreign civil aviation authority and the flight is required to be conducted under air carrier safety rules.

(iii)This subclause shall not apply to an aircraft owned or leased by a governmental entity or by a Member of Congress or a Member's immediate family member (including an aircraft owned by an entity that is not a public corporation in which the Member or Member's immediate family member has an ownership interest), provided that the Member does not use the aircraft anymore than the Member's or immediate family member's proportionate share of ownership allows.

2. Prior to the commencement of official travel on a corporate or private aircraft, the traveler or the traveler's designee shall contact a charter company in the departure or destination city to request a written estimate of the cost of a flight between the two cities on a similar aircraft of comparable size being provided by the corporation or private entity.

a) For example, if a Learjet 45 XR aircraft is being provided by the corporation or private entity, the traveler or the traveler's designee shall request a written estimate of the cost to charter a Learjet 45 XR aircraft from the departure city to the destination city.

b) If no charter company is located in either the departure or destination city which rents a similar aircraft of comparable size, a charter company nearest either the destination or departure city which does so shall be contacted for a written estimate.

3. Following the completion of official travel on a corporate or private aircraft, reimbursement for related expenses may be processed on direct pay vouchers payable to each individual traveler, to the corporation or private entity, or to the travel charge card vendor. The written estimate received from the charter company shall be attached to the voucher for processing.

IV. Interdepartmental Transportation

A. The reimbursement for interdepartmental transportation is authorized as a travel expense pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 58(e) but only for the incidental transportation expenses incurred within the duty station in the course of conducting official Senate business. Such reimbursement would include the following expenses:

1. Mileage when using a privately owned vehicle.

2. Public transportation, parking, auto rental, taxicab, or other mode of transportation hired for a fee.

B. Pursuant to S. Res. 294, agreed to April 29, 1980, section 2.(1), reimbursements and payments shall not be made for commuting expenses, including parking fees incurred in commuting.

SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES

I. Per Diem Expenses

A. Allowance

1. Per diem expenses include all charges for meals, lodging, personal use of room during daytime, baths, all fees and tips to waiters, porters, baggagemen, bell boys, hotel servants, dining room stewards and others on vessels, laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing, and fans in rooms. The term ''lodging'' does not include accommodations on airplanes or trains, and these expenses are not subsistence expenses.

a) Laundry: Laundry expenses must be incurred during the mid-way point of a trip. Reimbursable laundry expenses are for the refreshing of clothing during a trip, but not the maintenance of the clothing.

b) Meals: Reimbursable expenses incurred for meals while on official travel include meals and tips for the traveler only and may not include alcohol.

2. Per diem expenses will not be allowed an employee at his/her permanent duty station and will be allowed only when associated with round trip travel outside his/her permanent duty station.

a) Training: Meals in the duty station are only reimbursable when they are incurred during a training session. If the cost of the meal is included in the training session, then a meal certification form should be included with the voucher. The Committee on Rules and Administration will consider these on a case by case basis. Meal certification forms are available at the Disbursing Office or on the Senate intranet.

(1) Training is defined as a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education, in scientific, professional or technical fields which are or will be directly related to the performance by the employee of official duties for the Senate, in order to increase the knowledge, proficiency, ability, skill and qualifications of the employee in the performance of official duties.

(2) Meetings in the duty station where meals are served, such as but not limited to Chamber of Commerce monthly meetings do not constitute training. Therefore, the meals associated with these meetings are not an authorized reimbursable expense.

3. In any case where the employee's tour of travel requires more than two months' stay at a temporary duty station, consideration should be given to either a change in official station or a reduction in the per diem allowance.

4. Where for a traveler's personal convenience/business there is an interruption of travel or deviation from the direct route, the per diem expenses allowed will not exceed that which would have been incurred on uninterrupted travel by a usually traveled route and the time of departure from and return to official business shall be stated on the voucher.

5. Per diem expenses will be allowed through the time the traveler departs on personal business and will be recommenced at the time he/she returns to official business. Such dates and times shall be stated on the voucher.

B. Rates

1. The per diem allowances provided in these regulations represent the maximum allowance, not the minimum. It is the responsibility of each office to see that travelers are reimbursed only such per diem expenses as are justified by the circumstances affecting the travel. Maximum rates for subsistence expenses are established by the General Services Administration and are published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Maximum per diem rates for Alaska, Hawaii, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and possessions of the United States are established by the Department of Defense and are also published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. In addition, per diem rates for foreign countries are established by the Department of State and are published in the document titled, ''Maximum Travel Per Diem for Foreign Areas.''

a) Per diem expenses reimbursable to a Member or employee of the Senate in connection with official travel within the continental United States shall be made on the basis of actual expenses incurred, but not to exceed the maximum rate prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration for each day spent in a travel status. Any portion of a day while in a travel status shall be considered a full day for purposes of per diem entitlement.

b) When travel begins or ends at a point in the continental United States, the maximum per diem rate allowable for the portion of travel between such place and the place of entry or exit in the continental United States shall be the maximum rate prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration for travel within the continental United States. However, the quarter day in which travel begins, in coming from, or ends, in going to, a point outside the continental United States may be paid at the rate applicable to said point, if higher.

c) In traveling between localities outside the continental United States, the per diem rate allowed at the locality from which travel is performed shall continue through the quarter day in which the traveler arrives at his/her destination: Provided, that if such rate is not commensurate with the expenses

incurred, the per diem rate of the destination locality may be allowed for the quarter day of arrival.

d) Ship travel time shall be allowed at not to exceed the maximum per diem rate prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration for travel within the continental United States.

C. Computations

1. The date of departure from, and arrival at, the official station or other point where official travel begins and ends, must be shown on the travel voucher. Other points visited should be shown on the voucher but date of arrival and departure at these points need not be shown.

2. For computing per diem allowances official travel begins at the time the traveler leaves his/her home, office, or other point of departure and ends when the traveler returns to his/her home, office, or other point at the conclusion of his/her trip.

a) The maximum allowable per diem for an official trip is computed by multiplying the number of days on official travel, beginning with the departure date, by the maximum daily rate as prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration. If the maximum daily rate for a traveler's destination is higher than the prescribed daily rate, then the form ''Request for a Waiver of the Travel Regulations'' must be submitted with the voucher showing the maximum daily rate for that location and found in order upon audit by the Rules Committee.

b) Total per diem for an official trip includes lodging expenses (excluding taxes), meals (including taxes and tips), and other per diem expenses as defined by these regulations.

INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

I. Periodicals: Periodicals purchased while in a travel status should be limited to newspapers and news magazines necessary to stay informed on issues directly related to Senate business.

I. Traveler's Checks/Money Orders: The service fee for preparation of traveler's checks or money orders for use during official travel is allowable.

III. Communications

A. Communication services such as telephone, telegraph, and faxes, may be used on official business when such expeditious means of communications is essential. Government-owned facilities should be used, if practical. If not available, the cheapest practical class of commercial service should be used.

B. Additionally, one personal telephone call will be reimbursed for each day that a Senator or staff member is in a travel status. The calls may not exceed an average of five minutes a day, and cannot be reimbursed at a rate higher than $5.00 without itemized documentation.

IV. Stationery: Stationery items such as pens, paper, batteries, etc. which are necessary to conduct official Senate business while in a travel status are authorized.

V. Conference Center/Meeting Room Reservations: The fee for the reservation of a meeting room, conference room, or business center while on official travel is allowable.

VI. Other: This category would be used (with full explanation on the Expense Summary Report for Travel) to disclose any expense which would occur incidentally while on official travel, and for which there is no other expense category, i.e., interpreting services, hotel taxes, baggage cart rental, etc.

CONFERENCE AND TRAINING FEES

I. Training of Senators' Office Staff: The Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account is available to defray the fees associated with the attendance by the Senator or the Senator's employees at conferences, seminars, briefings, or classes which are or will be directly related to the performance of official duties.

A. When such fees (actual or reduced) are less than or equal to $500, have a time duration of not more than five (5) days, and have been asked to be waived or reduced for Government participation, reimbursement shall be made as an official travel expense. However, if the fee or time duration for meetings is in excess of the aforementioned, reimbursement shall be made as a non-travel expense.

B. Reimbursement shall not be allowed for tuition or fees associated with classes attended to earn credits towards an advanced degree or certification.

C. The costs of meals that are considered an integral, mandatory and non-separable element of the conference, seminar, briefing, or class will be allowed as part of the attendance fee when certified by the registrant. The meal certification form, which must accompany the reimbursement voucher, is available in the Disbursing Office or through the Senate Intranet.

II. Training of Committee Employees: Section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 provides for the expenditure of funds available to standing committees of the Senate for the training of professional staff personnel under certain conditions. It is the responsibility of each committee to set aside funds within its annual funding resolution to cover the expenses of such training.

A. Prior approval for attendance by professional staff at seminars, briefings, conferences, etc., as well as committee funds earmarked for training, will not be required when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The sponsoring organization has been asked to waive or reduce the fee for Government participation.

2. The fee involved (actual or reduced) is not in excess of $500.

3. The duration of the meeting does not exceed five (5) days.

B. When such fees are less than or equal to $500, have a time duration of not more than five (5) days, and have been requested to be waived or reduced for Government participation, reimbursement shall be made as a non-training, official travel expense. However, if the fee or time duration for meetings is in excess of the aforementioned, reimbursement shall be made as an official training expense. Reimbursement shall not be allowed for tuition or fees associated with classes attended to earn credits towards an advanced degree or certification.

C. If the fee or time duration for meetings is in excess of the aforementioned, advance approval by the Committee on Rules and Administration must be sought. Training requests should be received sufficiently in advance of the training to permit appropriate consideration by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

D. The costs of meals that are considered an integral, mandatory, and non-separable element of the conference, seminar, briefing, or class will be allowed as part of the attendance fee when certified by the registrant. The meal certification forms which must accompany the reimbursement voucher are available in the Disbursing Office or through the Senate Intranet.

III. Training of Administrative Offices Staff: The administrative approval of the voucher is the only approval required by the Committee on Rules and Administration. Training expenses of staff shall be limited to those fees associated with the attendance by staff at conferences, seminars, briefings, or classes which are or will be directly related to the performance of official duties. However, reimbursement shall not be allowed for tuition or fees associated with classes attended to earn credits towards an advanced degree or certification.

SPECIAL EVENTS

I. Retreats: Reimbursement of official travel expenses for office staff retreats is allowable from the contingent fund provided they follow the restrictions and authorizations in these regulations. Reimbursement of expenses for meeting rooms and equipment used during the retreat also is allowable. The vouchers for retreat expenses should be noted as retreat vouchers.

A. Discussion of Interpretative Ruling of the Select Committee on Ethics, No. 444, issued February 14, 2002

An office retreat may be paid for with either or both official funds (with Rules Committee approval) or principal campaign committee funds. Private parties may not pay expenses incurred in connection with an office retreat. Campaign workers may attend, at campaign expense, office retreats if their purpose in attending is to engage in official activities, such as providing feedback from constituents on legislative or representational matters.

B. When processing direct pay vouchers payable either to each individual traveler or to the vendor providing the retreat accommodations, prior approval by the Committee on Rules and Administration is not required. Retreat expenses, including but not limited to per diem, may be charged to the office's official centrally billed government travel charge card and paid on direct vouchers to the charge card vendor. Any deviation from this policy will be considered on a case by case basis upon the written request to, and approval from, the Committee on Rules and Administration.

C. Spreadsheet of Expenses

1. The Member office, Committee, or Administrative office, must attach to the retreat voucher(s) a spreadsheet detailing each day of the retreat broken out by breakfast, lunch, dinner, and lodging for each traveler attending the retreat.

2. For each traveler, the spreadsheet should list his/her duty station, additional per diem expenses incurred outside of the retreat, and any other retreat attendee the traveler shared a room with during the retreat. Any non-staff members attending the retreat also should be detailed on the spreadsheet. The ''Waiver of the Travel Regulations'' form does not need to be attached to retreat voucher(s) for the sharing of rooms.

3. The per diem expenses for staff members attending a retreat within their duty station are not reimbursable but should be detailed on the spreadsheet. All expenses for non-staff members attending the retreat are not reimbursable, but their attendance at the retreat must be taken into account when computing a per traveler cost on the spreadsheet.

4. An example of this spreadsheet can be found on the Senate Intranet.

II. Funerals: Members who represent the Senate at the funeral of a Member or former member may be reimbursed for the actual and necessary expenses of their attendance, pursuant to S. Res. 263, agreed to July 30, 1998. Additionally, the actual and necessary expenses of a committee appointed to represent the Senate at the funeral of a deceased Member or former Member may be reimbursed pursuant to S. Res. 458, agreed to October 4, 1984.

A. Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 58e, which authorizes reimbursement for travel while on official business within the United States, members and their staff may be reimbursed for the actual and necessary expenses of attending funerals within their home state only.

B. Examples of funerals that may be considered official business include, but are not limited to, funerals for military service

members, first responders, or public officials from the Member's state.

SENATORS' OFFICE STAFF

I. Legislative Authority (2 U.S.C. 58(e), as amended)

(e) Subject to and in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, a Senator and the employees in his office shall be reimbursed under this section for travel expenses incurred by the Senator or employee while traveling on official business within the United States. The term 'travel expenses' includes actual transportation expenses, essential travel-related expenses, and, where applicable, per diem expenses (but not in excess of actual expenses). A Senator or an employee of the Senator shall not be reimbursed for any travel expenses (other than actual transportation expenses) for any travel occurring during the sixty days immediately before the date of any primary or general election (whether regular, special, or runoff) in which the Senator is a candidate for public office (within the meaning of section 301(b) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971), unless his candidacy in such election is uncontested. For purposes of this subsection and subsection 2(a)(6) of this section, an employee in the Office of the President Pro Tempore, Deputy President Pro Tempore, Majority Leader, Minority Leader, Majority Whip, Minority Whip, Secretary of the Conference of the Majority, or Secretary of the Conference of the Minority shall be considered to be an employee in the office of the Senator holding such office.

II. Regulations Governing Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Accounts Adopted by the Committee on Rules and Administration Pursuant to Senate Resolution 170 agreed to September 19, 1979, as amended.

Section 1. For the purposes of these regulations, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) Documentation means invoices, bills, statements, receipts, or other evidence of expenses incurred, approved by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

(b) Official expenses means ordinary and necessary business expenses in support of the Senators' official and representational duties.

Section 2. No reimbursement will be made from the contingent fund of the Senate for any official expenses incurred under a Senator's Official Personnel and Office Expense Account, in excess of $50, unless the voucher submitted for such expenses is accompanied by documentation, and the voucher is certified by the properly designated staff member and approved by the Senator.

Section 3. Official expenses of $50 or less must either be documented or must be itemized in sufficient detail so as to leave no doubt of the identity of, and the amount spent for, each item. Items of a similar nature may be grouped together in one total on a voucher, but must be itemized individually on a supporting itemization sheet.

Section 4. Travel expenses shall be subject to the same documentation requirements as other official expenses, with the following exceptions:

(a) Hotel bills or other evidence of lodging costs will be considered necessary in support of per diem.

(b) Documentation will not be required for reimbursement of official travel in a privately owned vehicle.

Section 5. No documentation will be required for reimbursement of the following classes of expenses, as these are billed and paid directly through the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper:

(a) official telegrams and long distance calls and related services;

(b) stationery and other office supplies procured through the Senate Stationery Room for use for official business.

Section 6. The Committee on Rules and Administration may require documentation for expenses incurred of $50 or less, or authorize payment of expenses incurred in excess of $50 without documentation, in special circumstances.

Section 7. Vouchers for the reimbursement of official travel expenses to a Senator, employee, detailee pursuant to section 503(b)(3) of PL 96–465, or individual serving on a nominee recommendation panel pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 58(h) shall be accompanied by an ''Expense Summary Report—Travel'' signed by such person.

Vouchers for the reimbursement to any such individual for official expenses other than travel expenses shall be accompanied by an ''Expense Summary Report Non- Travel'' signed by such person.

COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE STAFF

(Includes all committees of the Senate, the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, and the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate)

I. Legislative Authority (2 U.S.C. 68b)

No part of the appropriations made under the heading 'Contingent Expenses of the Senate' may be expended for per diem and subsistence expenses (as defined in section 5701 of Title 5) at rates in excess of the rates prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration; except that (1) higher rates may be established by the Committee on Rules and Administration for travel beyond the limits of the continental United States, and (2) in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, reimbursement for such expenses may be made on an actual expense basis of not to exceed the daily rate prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration in the case of travel within the continental limits of the United States.

II. Incidental Expenses: The following items may be authorized or approved when related to official travel:

1. Commissions for conversion of currency in foreign countries.

2. Fees in connection with the issuance of passports, visa fees; costs of photographs for passports and visas; costs of certificates of birth, health, identity; and affidavits; and charges for inoculations which cannot be obtained through a federal dispensary when required for official travel outside the limits of the United States.

III. Hearing Expenses (committees only)

A. In connection with hearings held outside of Washington, D.C., committees are authorized to pay the travel expenses of official reporters having company offices in Washington, D.C., or in other locations, for traveling to points outside the District of Columbia or outside such other locations, provided:

1. Said hearings are of such a classified or security nature that their transcripts can be accomplished only by reporters having the necessary clearance from the proper federal agencies;

2. Extreme difficulty is experienced in the procurement of local reporters; or

3. The demands of economy make the use of Washington, D.C., reporters or traveling reporters in another area highly advantageous to the Senate; and further provided, that should such hearings exceed five days in duration, prior approval (for the payment of reporters' travel expenses) must be obtained from the Committee on Rules and Administration.

IV. Witnesses Appearing Before the Senate (committees only)

A. The authorized transportation expenses incurred and associated with a witness appearing before the Senate at a designated place of examination pursuant to S. Res. 259, agreed to August 5, 1987, will be those necessary transportation expenses incurred in traveling from the witness' place of residence to the site of the Senate examination and the necessary transportation expenses incurred in returning the witness to his/her residence.

B. If a witness departs from a city other than the witness' city of residence to appear before the Senate or returns to a city other than the witness' city of residence after appearing before the Senate, then Senate committees may reimburse the witness for transportation expenses incurred which are less than or equal to the amount the committee would have reimbursed the witness had the witness departed from and returned to his/her residence. Any deviation from this policy will be considered on a case by case basis upon the written request to, and approval from, the Committee on Rules and Administration.

C. Service fees for the preparation or mailing of passenger coupons for indigent or subpoenaed witnesses testifying before Senate committees shall be considered reimbursable for purposes of official travel.

D. Transportation expenses for witnesses may be charged to the Committee's official centrally billed government travel charge card and paid on direct vouchers to the charge card vendor. Additionally, per diem expenses for indigent witnesses may be charged to the Committee's official government charge card and paid on direct vouchers to the charge card vendor.

V. Regulations Governing Payments and Reimbursements from the Senate Contingent Funds for Expenses of Senate Committees and Administrative Offices

(Adopted by the Committee on Rules and Administration on July 23, 1987, as authorized by S. Res. 258, 100th Congress, 1st session, these regulations supersede regulations adopted by the Committee on October 22, 1975, and April 30, 1981, as amended.)

Section 1. Unless otherwise authorized by law or waived pursuant to Section 6, herein, no payment or reimbursement will be made from the contingent fund of the Senate for any official expenses incurred by any Senate committee (standing, select, joint, or special), commission, administrative office, or other authorized Senate activity whose funds are disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate, in excess of $50, unless the voucher submitted for such expenses is accompanied by documentation, and the voucher is certified by the properly designated staff member and approved by the Chairman or elected Senate Officer. The designation of such staff members for certification shall be done by means of a letter to the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Administration. ''Official expenses,'' for the purposes of these regulations, means ordinary and necessary business expenses in support of a committee's or administrative office's official duties.

Section 2. Such documentation should consist of invoices, bills, statements, receipts, or other evidence of expenses incurred, and should include ALL of the following information:

a) date expense was incurred;
b) the amount of the expense;
c) the product or service that was provided;
d) the vendor providing the product or service;
e) the address of the vendor; and
f) the person or office to whom the product or service was provided.

Expenses being claimed should reflect only current charges. Original copies of documentation should be submitted. However, legible facsimiles will be accepted.

Section 3. Official expenses of $50 or less must either be documented or must be itemized in sufficient detail so as to leave no doubt of the identity of, and the amount spent for, each item. However, hotel bills or other evidence of lodging costs will be considered necessary in support of per diem expenses and cannot be itemized.

Section 4. Documentation for services rendered on a contract fee basis shall consist of a contract status report form available from the Disbursing Office.

However, other expenses authorized expressly in the contract will be subject to the documentation requirements set forth in these regulations.

Section 5. No documentation will be required for the following expenses:

a) salary reimbursement for compensation on a ''When Actually Employed'' basis;

b) reimbursement of official travel in a privately owned vehicle;

c) foreign travel expenses incurred by official congressional delegations, pursuant to S. Res. 179, 95th Congress, 1st session;

d) expenses for receptions of foreign dignitaries, pursuant to S. Res. 247, 87th Congress, 2nd session, as amended; and

e) expenses for receptions of foreign dignitaries pursuant to Sec. 2 of P.L. 100–71 effective July 11, 1987.

Section 6. In special circumstances, the Committee on Rules and Administration may require documentation for expenses incurred of $50 or less, or authorize payment of expenses incurred in excess of $50 without documentation.

Section 7. Cash advances from the Disbursing Office are to be used for travel and petty cash expenses only. No more than $5000 may be outstanding at one time for Senate committees or administrative offices, unless otherwise authorized by law or resolution, and no more than $300 of that amount may be used for a petty cash fund. The individual receiving the cash advance will be personally liable. The Committee on Rules and Administration may, in special instances, increase these non-statutory limits upon written request by the Chairman of that committee and proper justification.

Section 8. Documentation of petty cash expenses shall be listed on an official petty cash itemization sheet available from the Disbursing Office and should include ALL of the following information:

a) date expense was incurred;

b) amount of expense;

c) product or service provided; and

d) the person incurring the expense (payee).

Each sheet must be signed by the Senate employee receiving cash and an authorizing official (i.e., someone other than the employee(s) authorized to certify vouchers). Original receipts or facsimiles must accompany the itemization sheet for petty cash expenses over $50.

Section 9. Petty cash funds should be used for the following incidental expenses:

a) postage;

b) delivery expenses;

c) interdepartmental transportation (as defined in United States Senate Travel Regulations);

d) single copies of publications (not subscriptions);

e) office supplies not available in the Senate Stationery Room; and

f) official telephone calls made from a staff member's residence or toll charges incurred within a staff member's duty station.

Petty cash funds should not be used for the procurement of equipment.

Section 10. Committees are encouraged to maintain a separate checking account only for the purpose of a petty cash fund and with a balance not in excess of $300.

Section 11. Vouchers for the reimbursement of official travel expenses to a committee chairman or member, officer, employee, contractor, detailee, or witness shall be accompanied by an ''Expense Summary Report—Travel'' signed by such person. Vouchers for the reimbursement to any such individual for official expenses other than travel expenses shall be accompanied by an ''Expense Summary Report—Non-Travel'' signed by such person.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL LAURA J. RICHARDSON

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President today I wish pay tribute to a great leader and an exceptional Army officer, MG Laura J. Richardson, the Chief Legislative Liaison for the Office of the Secretary of the Army, as she prepares to leave this position for one of even greater importance.

Major General Richardson has served our Army and our Nation for more than 30 years. She was a true professional—a dedicated soldier, leader, officer, spouse, and mother. Throughout her career, she commanded our great soldiers at many levels, deployed to combat numerous times in defense of our Nation, and was assigned to some of the most critical positions in our military. As the Army's Chief Legislative Liaison, Major General Richardson continues to provide outstanding leadership, advice, and sound professional judgment on numerous critical issues of enduring importance to the Army, Congress, and this Nation.

A native of Colorado, Major General Richardson was commissioned a second lieutenant of aviation upon graduation from Metropolitan State College in Denver. Her first assignment after flight school was in Korea with the 17th Aviation Brigade, where she served as a platoon leader, company executive officer, brigade staff officer, and company commander. She next served at Fort Hood, TX, on the III Corps staff and in the 6th Cavalry Brigade as a company commander and brigade adjutant. In 1999, General Richardson was selected to serve as the military aide to Vice President Al Gore at the White House in Washington, DC. Following that assignment, she moved to Fort Campbell, KY, to serve as the Division Deputy G–3 of the 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault, and later commanded the 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, including a deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Major General Richardson has served in a variety of joint and Army staff positions to include: an assault helicopter battalion operations officer and executive officer; deputy director, then director for the Army's Transformation Office; and the Army's liaison officer to the U.S. Senate. She also served as the garrison commander of Fort McNair and Fort Myer, VA.

Major General Richardson's assignments as a general officer include commanding general of the U.S. Army Operational Test Command, deputy commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, TX, and most recently, deputy chief of staff for communications with Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan.

For the past 3 years, Major General Richardson was the Chief of the U.S. Army Legislative Liaison. During this period of extraordinary change and challenge for the Army, Major General Richardson implemented and fostered improved strategic partnership with Congress. Through her leadership, the Army significantly enhanced relationships with both legislative chambers, improving understanding and broadening congressional support for Army priorities. Major General Richardson managed some of the most complex issues our Army faced through three legislative cycles with unparalleled results, enabling the Army to receive the necessary resources to support combat operations in two theaters of war, sustain the All-Volunteer Force, and improve the quality of life for our soldiers, their families, and our civilians.

On behalf of Congress and the United States of America, I thank Laura, her husband, MG Jim Richardson, and their entire family for their continued commitment, sacrifice, and contribution to this great nation. I join my colleagues in wishing her future success as she continues to serve our great Army and Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL GORDON

• Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, it is an honor to join the community of music lovers in New Mexico to recognize Mr. Russell Gordon in his final year of presenting the Los Alamos County Summer Concert Series.

For 28 years, the concert series has been a pillar of the community in northern New Mexico, bringing together families, neighbors, and friends with local, national, and internationally renowned musicians.

In 1988, Russell and his wife, Deborah, moved to White Rock, NM, where they started Gordon's CDs, Tapes and Records.

Local musicians remember playing on the sidewalk outside of his shop when Russell began the series in 1990. Today the series is a much larger affair with hundreds gathering around the historic Ashley Pond and other venues in Los Alamos on Friday evenings to begin their weekend with art, culture, and dance.

Russell Gordon's passion for music shines through the variety of genres featured, including Spanish, Native American, big band, bluegrass, classical, country music, folk, gospel, rock, jazz, and international acts. Russell has kept local New Mexican artists in his line-up over the years and helped grow and mentor the music scene throughout the State. He has inspired young musicians, expanded horizons, and has created countless memories for musicians and concert-goers in New Mexico.

As the ranking member on the Joint Economic Committee, I am proud to recognize the contributions of local small business owners like Russell and Deborah Gordon. We wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors and thank them for their contributions to the community.•

RECOGNIZING WINSHIP CANCER INSTITUTE

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I am honored to congratulate Winship

Cancer Institute at Emory University on earning the prestigious comprehensive cancer center designation from the National Cancer Institute. This designation now places Georgia's own Winship Cancer Institute in the top 1 percent of all cancer centers in the United States.

Winship Cancer Institute was established in 1937 with a gift from one of Georgia's generous philanthropists, Robert W. Woodruff, whose mission was to allow Georgians to get the best cancer treatment in their home State. He envisioned doctors and researchers working together in the same facility, so that scientists would be reminded of the urgency of their work and motivated to bring innovative treatments to patients. Winship treated 168 patients in its first year. Today Winship sees more than 15,000 patients every year.

The research being performed at Winship Cancer Institute is particularly important to Georgians because Winship researchers are studying the environmental and genetic issues unique to cancer in our State. Winship's goals are very specific: reducing the risk of cancer and detecting cancer at the earliest possible stage.

An estimated 50,000 Georgians will be diagnosed with cancer this year, and approximately a third of them will receive some component of their treatment at one of Winship's clinical locations in metropolitan Atlanta.

In recommending Winship for this special designation, former President Jimmy Carter spoke of the research and work being performed at Winship that helped save his life after his cancer diagnosis at his advanced age.

Today Winship continues to stand out because of its commitment to aligning its outstanding cancer research and education initiatives with its significant cancer prevention and cancer care efforts. I am proud to congratulate Winship Cancer Institute on this important milestone, as its researchers and clinicians continue their mission to lessen the burden of cancer for the citizens of Georgia.●

71 LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, my colleague Senator MIKE CRAPO joins me today in congratulating the 71 Livestock Association of southwestern Idaho and northeastern Nevada on its centennial anniversary. On June 24, 2017, members of the 71 Livestock Association will gather at the Three Creek School to celebrate 100 years of good stewardship on our western rangelands.

The 71 Livestock Association has deep roots in southwestern Idaho and northeastern Nevada and boasts a colorful heritage that defines our idea of western ranching. In the early 1870s, the Three Creek Area's premier cattleman, Joseph Scott, was the first to use a 71 brand after purchasing it from a Nevada rancher. The 71 Livestock Association took its name from that brand in homage to Scott.

In 1905, local ranchers requested that the Federal Government look into creating a forest reserve to protect grazing and other resources on the range. Less than a year later in 1906, with Gifford Pinchot as the first Chief of the Forest Service, President Theodore Roosevelt signed into law a forest reserve in Nevada. The creation of the forest reserve sparked a partnership between the Three Creek Ranchers and the U.S. Forest Service.

In December 1917, the ranchers of Owyhee and Twin Falls Counties came together to form the 71 Livestock Association with Joe E. Hawes as the first chairman. Noteworthy, the 71 Livestock Association started with both woolgrowers and cattle producers, which created a stronger partnership and greater collaboration among all range users and managers.

In the early 1930s, livestock producers in the West were concerned with deterioration of the range due to uncontrolled grazing and wanted to better protect the public lands. Due to that concern, Congress passed the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934, and the 71 Livestock Association created its first constitution and bylaws. The Taylor Grazing Act established grazing boards, and the 71 Livestock Association had three members on Idaho's very first grazing advisory board.

The 71 Livestock Association has seen many changes and has evolved to make conditions better on the range. In its formative years, they helped create a system for grazing as the main enforcement body on the forest reserve in Nevada. As the Bureau of Land Management began managing the range in southwestern Idaho and Elko County, NV, they helped to allocate range to its members and to help install key infrastructure like fences, pipelines, roads, phone service, electrical power, and even a tax levy for the Three Creek School.

From its inception, the 71 Livestock Association has experienced many challenges from jackrabbit infestations, plant poisoned cattle, severe winters, environmental lawsuits, endangered species, National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, regulations, and range fires. In addition, they have lived through the Sage Brush Rebellion and the Jarbridge Shovel Brigade. Through it all, they have been instrumental at bringing together ranchers and Federal, State and local agencies to discuss and resolve issues with a spirit of cooperation.

Today the 71 Livestock Association has been at the center of rangeland fire management. In their true spirit, the 71 Livestock Association pitched in to help with the rehabilitation and reclamation of the land and helped create and develop the Rangeland Fire Protection Associations, RFPA. By being first on the scene, the RFPA have been instrumental in helping to stop fires before they develop into larger uncontrolled range fires.

Because of its success and standing in the region, the 71 Livestock Association has seen members go on to represent constituents of southern Idaho in the Idaho State Legislature—notably, the late Noy Brackett, his son Bert Brackett, and the late George Swan.

The 71 Livestock Association serves as a role model for Idaho and the Nation on how to innovate and collaborate on land management issues. Today they remain focused on advancing their mission of ''bettering conditions on the range.'' Congratulations to the 71 Livestock Association on a successful 100 years of operation.●

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL ORPHAN TRAIN COMPLEX

● Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I would like to acknowledge an important event in our history, the Orphan Train Movement. This movement is not only extremely important to Kansas; it also placed approximately 250,000 orphaned, abandoned, and homeless children in homes across the United States. The National Orphan Train Complex, which is headquartered in our very own Concordia, KS—also known as Orphan Train Town—continues to tell stories of children who were impacted by these orphan trains.

The first orphan train arrived in Kansas in 1859 to the city of Wathena, where three children were placed with Kansas families. Since this first train, 12,000 children were moved to Kansas homes. These children would grow up in Kansas, raising families, growing the economy, and serving their communities through farming, teaching, and starting businesses. These children and their journey are an integral part of Kansas history.

The mission of the National Orphan Train Complex in Concordia, KS, is to collect, preserve, interpret, and disseminate knowledge about the orphan trains and the children who rode them. The National Orphan Train Complex is the only organization compiling a master list of orphan train riders to assist future generations with genealogical information. The tireless work done by this organization deserves acknowledgement. I am proud to recognize the 15th annual celebration of Orphan Train Riders, which takes place June 1 through June 4.

I ask my colleagues join me in recognizing the Orphan Train Movement and the National Orphan Train Complex on their outstanding research and preservation of our Nation's history.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:40 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1005. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

H.R. 1162. An act 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.

H.R. 1329. An act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1370. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1545. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the authority of the Secretary of the Veterans Affairs to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1725. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit certain reports relating to medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.

H.R. 1808. An act to amend and improve the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1809. An act to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2288. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2473. An act to direct the Attorney General to study issues relating to human trafficking, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 366) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes.

Enrolled Bill Signed

At 5:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 366. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1005. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1162. An act 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.

H.R. 1329. An act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1370. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs .

H.R. 1545. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1725. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit certain reports relating to medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1808. An act to amend and improve the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2288. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 2473. An act to direct the Attorney General to study issues relating to human trafficking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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–1641. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pesticides; Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule; Delay of Effective Date'' (FRL No. 9962–94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1642. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting the report of four (4) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of rear admiral in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1643. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of General Daniel B. Allyn, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1644. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Defense Production Act Annual Fund Report for Fiscal Year 2016''; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1645. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12170 on November 14, 1979; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1646. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of a national emergency declared in Executive Order 13222 with respect to the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1647. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Quality Designations for the 2012 Primary Annual Fine Particle Matter (PM2.5) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for Areas in Tennessee'' ((RIN2060–AT44) (FRL No. 9962–89–OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1648. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Louisiana; Volatile Organic Compounds Rule Revision and Stage II Vapor Recovery'' (FRL No. 9962–21–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1649. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; El Paso Carbon Monoxide Limited Maintenance Plan'' (FRL No. 9962–20–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1650. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Compliance Date Extension; Formaldehyde Emission Standards for Composite Wood Products'' ((RIN2070–AK35) (FRL No. 9962–86)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1651. A communication from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule to List 6 Foreign Species of Elasmobranchs Under the Endangered Species Act (RIN0648–XE184) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1652. A communication from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to negotiations with Canada and Mexico regarding modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1653. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare Program; Advancing Care Coordination Through Episode Payment Models (EPMs); Cardiac Rehabilitation Incentive Payment Model; and Changes to the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Model (CJR); Delay of Effective Date'' ((RIN0938–AS90) (CMS–5519–F3)) received in

the Office of the President of the Senate on May 18, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1654. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare Program; Advancing Care Coordination Through Episode Payment Models (EPMs); Cardiac Rehabilitation Incentive Payment Model; and Changes to the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Model (CJR)'' ((RIN0938–AS90) (CMS–5519–F)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1655. A communication from the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2017–0516); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1656. A communication from the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2017–0517); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1657. A communication from the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2017–0515); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1658. A communication from the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2017–0514); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1659. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''340B Drug Pricing Program Ceiling Price and Manufacturer Civil Monetary Penalties Regulation'' (RIN0906–AA89) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 18, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1660. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Clarification of When Products Made or Derived From Tobacco Are Regulated as Drugs, Devices, or Combination Products; Amendments to Regulations Regarding 'Intended Uses'; Further Delayed Effective Date; Request for Comments; Extension of Comment Period'' ((RIN0910–AH19) (Docket No. FDA–2015–N–2002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1661. A communication from the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Corporation's fiscal year 2016 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1662. A communication from the Deputy Inspector General for Audit Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Met Many Requirements of the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 but Did Not Fully Comply for Fiscal Year 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1663. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries'' (RIN0648–XF210) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1664. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries'' (RIN0648–XF259) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1665. A communication from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pacific Island Fisheries; 2016 Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures'' (RIN0648–XF587) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–29. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho memorializing the importance of agriculture in the United States; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 6

Whereas, since the beginning of time, the ability of man to provide food, fiber and fuel for himself and others has determined his independence, freedom and security; and

Whereas, the strength of a nation is based on its ability to sufficiently provide safe and reliable food, fiber and fuel for its people; and

Whereas, the family farm unit is the foundation of agriculture and one of the basic strengths of the United States; and

Whereas, a strong and viable agricultural industry is a very important part of our national security and overall well-being; and

Whereas, federal, state and local laws and regulations require farmers, ranchers and food processors in the United States to meet the highest standards in the world when it comes to environmental protection, worker safety, wage rates and food safety concerns; and

Whereas, United States farmers, ranchers and food processors pay for record audits on farm inspections and USDA product inspections to confirm that necessary criteria are met to adhere to the laws and regulations that apply; and

Whereas, the Food Safety Modernization Act requires that all food products, foreign and domestic, must adhere to the same food safety standards, and yet only 2% of all imported food products are actually inspected. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we urge that United States farmers, ranchers and food processors be enabled to compete freely and trade fairly in foreign and domestic markets on a strictly level playing field. Be it further

Resolved, That food safety standards in the United States should be enforced fully on food from foreign countries wishing to participate in markets that lie within the boundaries of the United States and funded in a way that does not burden the United States taxpayer. And be it further

Resolved, When determining the economic value of international trade agreements, we urge that the cost of environmental protection, worker safety, wage rates and food safety standards be quantified and considered in such determinations. And be it further

Resolved, That we encourage the education of the general public regarding the importance of the role agriculture plays in the development of a society, recognizing that such public education, primarily at the middle and secondary school levels, is critical in the preservation and strengthening of the family farm unit and the overall preservation and strengthening of the agricultural industry itself. And be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM–30. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho urging the United States Air Force, President of the United States, and the United States Congress to thoroughly and conscientiously evaluate the utility and efficacy of basing a squadron of F–35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft at Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, to facilitate a continued flying mission for the Idaho Air National Guard; to the Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 9

Whereas, the State and the citizens of Idaho have a proud tradition of support for the armed forces of the United States of America; and

Whereas, the Idaho Air National Guard has distinguished itself in service to the State of Idaho and to the citizens of our state and the United States of America; and

Whereas, Gowen Field, located in the City of Boise, Idaho, has served admirably for decades as an effective, world-class military installation, both in federal and state service, as a base of operations for the Idaho Army National Guard and the Idaho Air National Guard; and

Whereas, the U.S. Air Force has chosen Gowen Field among five finalists for two sites to locate squadrons of F–35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft; and

Whereas, Gowen Field is the only finalist for the basing of F–35 aircraft in the western United States; and

Whereas, Gowen Field, Boise, and southwestern Idaho possess the facilities, infrastructure, airspace, climate, landscape, skilled personnel, relevant private-sector industry and strong public support for military operations required to effectively support the siting of F–35 aircraft; and

Whereas, the Idaho Air National Guard's existing A–10 aircraft flying mission faces the distinct possibility of elimination in the foreseeable future; and

Whereas, the economies of Boise, southwestern Idaho and the entire state would be materially damaged by the loss of an Idaho Air National Guard flying mission at Gowen Field, which now provides jobs and career opportunities for thousands of Idaho citizens, both military and civilian; and

Whereas, it is incumbent upon the leadership of the State of Idaho to extend its active support to efforts to maintain a viable flying mission for the Idaho Air National Guard, such as that which would be provided by the U.S. Air Force's basing of F–35 aircraft at Gowen Field. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we encourage and call upon the U.S. Air Force, the Administration and Congress to thoroughly and conscientiously evaluate the utility and efficacy of basing a squadron of F–35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft at Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, to facilitate a continued flying mission for the Idaho Air National Guard. And be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the United States, to the Secretary of the Air Force, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM–31. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Michigan memorializing the United States Congress to appropriate funds from the Nuclear Waste Fund for the establishment of a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste or reimburse electric utility customers that paid into the fund; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas, The nuclear power industry needs a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste produced by reactors. Nuclear power plays a vital role in meeting our nation's current and future energy needs. However, the failure to construct a permanent repository severely impedes efforts to construct new power plants to provide this clean and reliable base load power; and

Whereas, Over the last thirty years, the nuclear power industry and its customers have paid the federal government billions of dollars to construct a permanent repository. Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, the U.S. Congress established the Nuclear Waste Fund to collect money for the repository. Revenue to the fund came from mandatory fees assessed on all nuclear energy. Since 1983, customers of Michigan electric utilities alone have paid $812 million into the fund for construction of the repository; and

Whereas, A permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste has not been established and constructed. More than 2,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel from power plants continue to accumulate at temporary, and potentially vulnerable, sites across the nation, adding to the more than 70,000 metric tons already stored at these sites; and

Whereas, The Nuclear Waste Fund contains a substantial balance for establishment of the repository. While fee collection was suspended as of May 16, 2014, the fund still contains a balance of over $31 billion for the express purpose of supporting radioactive waste disposal activities. It is imperative that Congress meet its obligation to the nuclear power industry and U.S. citizens that paid into this fund; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate, (the House of Representatives concurring), That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to appropriate funds from the Nuclear Waste Fund for the establishment of a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste or reimburse electric utility customers that paid into the fund; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–32. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho supporting the Department of Energy, the President of the United States, and the United States Congress to identify, commit, and sustain the necessary funding to allow the Department of Energy to continue to make progress at meeting its cleanup milestones to benefit the citizens of Idaho and its environment; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 3

Whereas, at the direction of the United States government, the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho site was established in 1949 to demonstrate peaceful uses of splitting the atom through nuclear reactor research and development in its mission to create electricity for commercial use and propulsion for the United States Navy fleet; and

Whereas, during its history the Department of Energy's Idaho site designed and built fifty-two nuclear reactors, perfecting light-water reactor design and operation, proving that reactors could create more fuel than they use, extending the useful life of our country's naval vessels, and providing isotopes to the medical community for the elimination of cancer and other diseases; and

Whereas, in its sixty-eight-year history, radioactive and hazardous wastes were generated on-site, or were shipped to Idaho, that required storage or disposal using industry-accepted practices at the time, which presented environmental challenges at the 890 square-mile federal site and to the underlying Snake River Plain Aquifer, the primary drinking and agricultural water source for more than 300,000 Idaho residents; and

Whereas, elected officials, federal department administrators, environmental interest organizations, Idaho citizens, and the nuclear industry itself recognized the need to change past waste storage and disposal practices and clean up legacy waste sites that posed a potential or confirmed risk to people or the environment; and

Whereas, after several years of assessment and negotiations, the State of Idaho entered into a legally binding agreement with the federal government on December 9, 1991, to assess all potential waste sites at the Department of Energy's Idaho site and use the risk-based process outlined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act to clean up legacy waste sites with the intent of protecting the second-largest continuous aquifer in the United States and restoring or preserving areas of the site to protect people and the ancestral lands of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes; and

Whereas, the Department of Energy and its contractors have completed environmental assessments of all suspected waste sites at the Department of Energy's Idaho site and completed the cleanup actions outlined in twenty of twenty-five records of decision; and

Whereas, environmental scientists and engineers have employed innovative cleanup technologies and processes to protect employees, the public, and the environment, while also expediting the remediation of contaminated sites and saving taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars; and

Whereas, the Department of Energy and its contractor continue to make measurable progress removing Cold War weapons waste from an unlined landfill with the aim of protecting the Snake River Plain Aquifer—one of Idaho's most precious natural resources. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the members of the First Regular Session the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein; that, in this twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order, we support the Department of Energy, the Administration and Congress to identify, commit and sustain the necessary funding to allow the Department of Energy to continue to make progress at meeting its cleanup milestones to benefit the citizens of Idaho and its environment. Be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature supports continued funding for the national and international missions at the Department of Energy's Idaho site to include, but not be limited to, nuclear energy research and development, bioenergy research, renewable energy research, cyber security advancements, smart-grid technology deployments, and national security support to the Department of Homeland Security and other departments. And be it further

Resolved, That the chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POW—33. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho relative to the Hells Canyon Complex; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 2

Whereas, the Snake River, and its surface and ground water tributaries, is the backbone of Idaho's economy, supplying water for 76% of Idaho's population, cities, businesses, dairies, factories and more than 3 million acres of irrigated lands above Idaho Power Company's Hells Canyon Complex; and

Whereas, in the first half of the 20th century, hydropower development in the mid-Snake and Hells Canyon spurred economic development, irrigation, industry and growth in Southern Idaho and has provided Idahoans with clean electric energy at rates that are among the lowest in the nation; and

Whereas, the State of Idaho, while recognizing the benefit of hydropower generation to the citizens of the State through sustaining economic growth and agriculture, also acknowledged the value of protecting Idaho's water, property rights and natural resources; and

Whereas, in 1964, the State, recognizing its sovereignty over Idaho's water resources and potential intrusions upon that sovereignty, approved through constitutional amendment, Section 7, Article XV, Constitution of the State of Idaho, the establishment of the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) whose members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, and empowered the IWRB to formulate a comprehensive State Water Plan as described in Section 42–1734A, Idaho Code; and

Whereas, pursuant to Section 42–1734A, Idaho Code, the State of Idaho has adopted a State Water Plan (''Plan''); and

Whereas, Policy 1A of the Plan provides that: ''The State asserts sovereignty over the development and use of Idaho's water resources for the benefits of its citizens. [And that] [a]ny action by the federal government or other states that would impair Idaho's sovereignty over its water resources is against state policy''; and

Whereas, Policy 1N of the Plan provides that: ''Appropriation of water for hydropower should be subordinated to subsequent

upstream beneficial uses to assure an adequate supply of water for all future beneficial uses, and minimum stream flows for hydropower projects should be established by state action''; and

Whereas, Policy 2B of the Plan provides that: ''The State asserts primacy over the management of its fish and wildlife and water resources. Accordingly, any reintroduction or introduction of federally listed species or other aquatic species without state consultation and approval is against the policy of the State of Idaho because it would impair or impede the state's primacy over its water resources''; and

Whereas, Policy 4A of the Plan provides that the main stem Snake River will be managed to meet or exceed minimum average daily flows at Milner, Murphy, Weiser, Johnson Bar and Lime Point and that these ''minimum flows provide the management framework for the optimum development of water resources of the Snake River. Basin''; and

Whereas, Policy 4H of the Plan provides that: ''Hydropower generation is a beneficial use of the flow of the Snake River, and it is in the public interest to protect the minimum average daily flows set forth in Policy 4A as a base flow for hydropower use''; and

Whereas, Policy 4J of the Plan provides that: ''The minimum stream flows set forth in Policy 4A provide adequate flows for Snake River fish, wildlife, recreation, and scenic values in the main stem Snake River below Milner Dam''; and

Whereas Policy 4C of the State Water Plan in discussing the Swan Falls Agreement, recognized the value of hydropower through the acknowledgment and protection of minimum stream flows and ensured that electric rates remain beneficial to its citizens; and

Whereas, in 1976 the State of Idaho in partnership with neighboring states of Oregon and Washington (collectively ''States''), together with the National Marine Fisheries Service filed a petition with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) requesting that ''it issue an order requiring the licensee to take appropriate measures as compensation for'' the loss of salmon and steelhead due to the construction and operation of the Hells Canyon Complex; and

Whereas, in 1980 the States and the Idaho Power Company executed a settlement agreement that, by its terms, constituted ''full and complete mitigation for all numerical losses of salmon and steelhead caused by or in any way associated with the construction of, and operation within the existing license'' for, the Hells Canyon Complex; and ''further agree not to contend or support contentions by others before any agency or in any proceeding that additional fish or fish facilities are required by or in any way associated with the construction of, or operation within the existing license for,'' the Hells Canyon Complex; and

Whereas, the Idaho Power Company has complied with the terms of the 1980 Settlement Agreement with state support; and

Whereas, in 1984 the State and Idaho Power Company entered into the implementing agreements for the Swan Falls Settlement, which confirmed the State's primacy over flows of the Snake River through the establishment of minimum flows from Milner Dam to reaches below the Hells Canyon Complex; and

Whereas, the Idaho Power Company, since 2003, has been seeking to relicense the Hells Canyon Complex before the FERC under the Federal Power Act; and

Whereas, the State Water Plan directs the Water Resource Board to participate in the Hells Canyon Complex relicensing to ensure that the conditions in ''the new license for the Hells Canyon Complex includes operational conditions that preserve and enhance the generation capacity of the project in a manner consistent with the State Water Plan''; and

Whereas, in 2004 the State, participating water users, and the Nez Perce Tribe entered into the 2004 Snake River Water Rights Agreement providing for cooperative agreements to assist in the recovery of listed species under the Endangered Species Act in tributaries below the Hells Canyon Complex while providing certainty to Idaho landowners and water users in the exercise of property rights; and

Whereas, the 2004 Snake River Water Rights Agreement identified specific actions by the water users with respect to the rental of water to augment flows for listed anadromous fish below the Hells Canyon Complex, such agreement providing certain protections to the water users; and

Whereas, water users have benefited from the certainty regarding the water supply availability and operating conditions in the reaches of the Snake River upstream from the Hells Canyon Complex; and

Whereas, the Idaho Water Users Association, through Association Resolution No. 2017—6, has and continues to oppose introduction of salmon and steelhead species into surface waters above the Hells Canyon Complex due to the drastic impacts on irrigated agriculture, industry, water supply and electric generation; and

Whereas, Section 42–1734C, Idaho Code, requires that the Idaho State Water Plan ''be submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission . . . as the state water plan for the conservation, development, management and optimum use of the state of Idaho's water resource'' and the Plan has been submitted;. and

Whereas, the State committed to certain actions through the 1980 Agreement, the Swan Falls Agreement, and the 2004 Snake River Agreement, that provide the citizens of Idaho certainty and appropriate management of the State'S resources in a manner consistent with the intentions provided herein; and

Whereas, the State of Oregon has taken certain actions in the relicensing proceeding for the Hells Canyon Complex in an attempt to mandate the passage and introduction of salmon and steelhead above Hells Canyon Dam and into the Idaho waters of the Snake River, which form a border between Oregon and Idaho, that directly infringe upon Idaho's sovereignty over its water resources and primacy over management of its fish and water resources; and

Whereas, the Governor of the State of Idaho, through the Office of Species Conservation, is charged with coordinating with all state departments and divisions with respect to endangered, threatened, candidate species, species petitioned to be listed, and rare and declining species, coordinating state response to federal recovery plans and projects, participating in regional. efforts and providing input to federal and state agencies with regard to such species act as an ombudsman for state citizens on ESA issues, and ensuring state primacy over management of its fish and wildlife, including prevention of reintroduction or introduction of listed species without state consultation and approval; and

Whereas, the Governor, by letter to the Natural Resources Agency Administrators and Directors dated May 27, 2016, directed that: ''Each agency shall coordinate with the Governor's Office of Species Conservation and status of any introduction or reintroduction proposals under the Endangered Species Act''; and

Whereas, the Governor, by letter to Oregon Governor Brown dated July 19, 2016, advised that Idaho would not agree to Oregon's passage or introduction proposal above Hells Canyon Dam, in violation of Sections 67–818 and 67–6302, Idaho Code, stating in part: ''Such occurrence would violate longstanding Idaho law and policy opposing reintroduction of any species without the express consent of the Idaho State Legislature and executive branch. . . . Based upon state law and in part on our past experiences with reintroduced a species (e.g., wolves), Idaho cannot and will not, agree to the reintroduction of salmon or steelhead above Hells Canyon Dam.''; and

Whereas, while the Idaho Power Company serves customers in Idaho and eastern Oregon, approximately 95% of its customers are located in Idaho; and

Whereas, the Governor, by letter to Oregon Governor Brown dated January 17, 2017, advised that Oregon's draft 401 conditions related to fish passage and reintroduction would impact Idaho waters and citizens and interfere with Idaho's sovereign interests in managing its natural resources; and

Whereas, the Governor's January 17, 2017, letter further advised that with respect to ''any new requirement imposed by Oregon will lead to additional costs that will disproportionately impact Idaho customers'' and ''passage and reintroduction conditions should be removed''; and

Whereas, protecting Idaho's sovereignty by ensuring that Oregon does not impose fish passage and introduction in violation of Idaho law and policy will continue to be a benefit to Idaho's citizens through greater certainty regarding property rights, water supply and economic development. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the First Regular Session of the sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that the State of Idaho supports actions by the Governor and the Attorney General to oppose passage and introduction of salmon or steelhead above Hells Canyon Dam, that are necessary to protect Idaho's sovereignty, including its waters and property rights, and to ensure that Idaho's sovereignty is not violated by the introduction of salmon or steelhead to the reaches of the Snake River, and its Idaho tributaries, above Hells Canyon Dam. Be it further

Resolved, That the Governor and the Attorney General shall undertake such action as is necessary and appropriate to ensure that the terms of the 1980 Agreement are complied with in regard to mitigation for the Hells Canyon Complex to protect upstream water users, water rights, landowners and economic development from the State of Oregon's efforts to pass and introduce salmon and steelhead above Hells Canyon Dam into waters of the State. And be it further

Resolved, That consistent with the authority of Section 67–6302, Idaho Code, the Legislature of the State of Idaho does not approve of the efforts by the State of Oregon and opposes any action by a federal agency, or any entity acting on behalf of a federal agency, or other groups, entities or individuals to require the passage and introduction or reintroduction of salmon or steelhead above Hells Canyon Dam, including trying to include in the FERC license for the Hells Canyon Project any provision that would result in introduction or reintroduction of any such species into the waters of the State of Idaho. And be it further

Resolved, That, the State of Idaho supports the relicensing of Hells Canyon Complex consistent with the following policies: (A) The license is consistent with the policies set forth in the Idaho State Water Plan; (B) The license recognizes that no salmon and steelhead populations can be introduced or reintroduced above Hells Canyon Dam; (C)

The license recognizes that the water rights for the Hells Canyon Complex are subordinated to future upstream uses as set forth in the partial decrees for each of the three dams; and (D) The mitigation requirements in the license for salmon and steelhead comply with the terms of the 1980 Settlement Agreement. And be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM–34. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho encouraging western states and the Federal government to establish cooperative and coordinated efforts with the State of Idaho to prevent, to whatever extent possible, enforcement of invasive species laws and rapid response protocols, further spread of the mussels, and containment where established, until such time as viable tools for eradication are discovered; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 4

Whereas, eradication of invasive species is a matter of national concern, transcending state lines; and

Whereas, the presence of quagga and zebra mussels, collectively referred to as dreissenid mussels, in the West is a matter of growing and alarming concern; and

Whereas, the mussels were introduced into the Great Lakes in the 1980s by watercraft from the shipping industry through ballast water and adhesion to watercraft, having originated in Eastern Europe near the Black Sea, and now having spread to 32 states, including a discovery of larvae in Montana in November 2016; and

Whereas, in her five-year lifetime, a single quagga or zebra mussel will produce about 5 million eggs, 100,000 of which reach adulthood. The offspring of a single mussel will in turn produce a total of half a billion adult offspring; and

Whereas, mussels spread, in large part, by attaching to exposed hard surfaces of watercraft, as well as ballast water discharges, and being transported from water body to water body, many times across state lines, and many western states have now enacted laws to establish watercraft inspection programs to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels to unaffected waters; and

Whereas, it is estimated that mussel introduction into the State of Idaho would cost Idaho approximately $94 million per year. This figure does not include agriculture-related impacts, which would be devastating to the state, but reflects the impact to hydroelectric facilities, recreation areas, fish hatcheries, golf courses, intake valves for drinking water facilities and irrigation facilities; and

Whereas, federal action, and federal regulations, are necessary to address decontamination policies for those infested federal waters in the West; and

Whereas, the State of Idaho seeks to foster cooperative efforts between the western states and the federal government for the establishment of a coordinated effort to prevent, to whatever extent possible, through efforts including inspections, decontamination policies, enforcement of invasive species laws and rapid response protocols, further spread of the mussels, and containment where established, until such time as viable tools for eradication are discovered. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we encourage western states and the federal government to establish cooperative and coordinated efforts with the State of Idaho to prevent, to whatever extent possible, through efforts including inspections, decontamination policies, enforcement of invasive species laws and rapid response protocols, further spread of the mussels, and containment where established, until such time as viable tools for eradication are discovered. And be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States, to the leadership of the houses, assemblies and senates in the states of Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and California, and to the Pacific Northwest Economic Region.

POM–35. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho urging the United States Congress to appropriate $8 million of the authorized $20 million for fiscal year 2018 to the four Northwest states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, according to the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), which includes the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA); to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 8

Whereas, Dreissenid mussels, specifically quagga mussels (Dreissena rostriformis bugensis) and zebra mussels (Dreissena polymorpha), are aquatic invasive species that cause irreparable ecological damage to many waters in the United States; and

Whereas, we are requesting $8 million in federal matching funding for FY 2018 to combat the immediate threat of invasive quagga and zebra mussels to the Pacific Northwest region. Until recently, the Pacific Northwest region remained one of the only regions in North America without invasive quagga and zebra mussels. In November 2016, invasive mussel larvae were detected at Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Tiber Reservoir, located in Montana, and part of the Missouri River system. In response, Montana Governor. Steve Bullock declared a natural resources state of emergency; and

Whereas, further spread of these invasive mussels will have a devastating and far-reaching impact on the economic and environmental wellbeing of the entire region. If invasive mussel populations become established in the Pacific Northwest, they will cost the region $500 million a year, so it is vital that we work together to ensure that the invasive mussels do not make the short trip across the Continental Divide and into the Columbia River system. Failing to ensure this would not only result in Idaho water bodies becoming infested with quagga and zebra mussels, but the rest of the Columbia River Basin and region as well; and

Whereas, for these reasons, we ask Congress to appropriate $8 million of the authorized $20 million for FY 2018 to the four Northwest states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, according to the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), which includes the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA). The $8 million in federal matching funding would be used to enhance funds already allocated by the states for watercraft inspection and decontamination stations with the purpose of protecting the Columbia River Basin against invasive mussels. Now that invasive mussel larvae have been found in Montana, federal assistance is key to ensuring that the Columbia River Basin system is protected and that invasive mussels do not spread to the rest of the region; and

Whereas, we appreciate the funding that Congress appropriated under the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA) and WIIN to assist the four Northwest states. The emergency in Montana highlights the constant and ongoing threat of invasive mussels to the region, and the importance of the states' continued receipt of federal matching funding to support their efforts to protect against these aquatic invaders. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you consider our request and take the necessary steps to ensure that federal funds are appropriated to the four Northwest states in FY 2018. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we urge Congress to appropriate $8 million of the authorized $20 million for FY 2018 to the four Northwest states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, according to the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), which includes the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA). The $8 million in federal matching funding will be used to enhance funds already allocated by the states for watercraft inspection and decontamination stations with the purpose of protecting the Columbia River Basin against invasive mussels. Now that invasive mussel larvae have been found in Montana, federal assistance is key to ensuring that the Columbia River Basin system is protected and that invasive mussels do not spread to the rest of the region. And be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Interior, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM–36. A concurrent resolution adopted by the. Legislature of the State of Michigan urging the United States Department of Energy and the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission to fulfill their obligation to establish a permanent solution for handling high-level nuclear waste; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Whereas, Nuclear power has been a significant source of the nation's electricity production over the last four decades. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, nuclear power provided about 20 percent of the electricity produced in the United States in 2015, and Michigan's three nuclear power plants were responsible for about 26 percent of the electricity generated in the state; and

Whereas, Since the earliest days of nuclear power, determining how to deal with used nuclear fuel has been a great dilemma. Currently, more than 70,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel are stored in pools or casks at temporary sites around the country, including locations in Michigan. This high-level radioactive waste demands exceptional care in all facets of its storage and disposal, including transportation; and

Whereas, More than 30 years ago, Congress enacted the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to address the long-term storage of nuclear waste. The act requires the federal government, through the Department of Energy, to build a repository for the permanent storage

of high-level radioactive material from nuclear power plants and to begin accepting waste by January 31, 1998. It is now 2017, and the nation remains without a permanent repository, despite billions of dollars collected from electric ratepayers for the project; and

Whereas, The Department of Energy's National Laboratories have pioneered a method of recycling spent nuclear waste into fuel, known as pyrochemical processing, which could extend the productive life of uranium and cut down on nuclear waste. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission should prioritize the development and implementation of technical specifications and licensing requirements to enable the construction of Generation IV reactors capable of performing pyrochemical processing; and

Whereas, The federal government needs to build a permanent repository and promote the construction of pyrochemical processing facilities. Spent nuclear fuel continues to pile up at temporary sites around the country, and the ongoing problem of permanent disposal is an impediment to the potential of nuclear power to help meet our nation's energy needs. Our nation can only continue to safely store this waste at temporary sites for so long; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we urge the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to fulfill their obligation, as provided by law, to establish a permanent solution for handling high-level nuclear waste, and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–37. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho urging the President of the United States, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the United States Congress to allow individual states to serve as the primary regulator of health insurance plans and permit the availability and sale of nonsubsidized health insurance plans in accordance with state-established statutes, regulations, and rules governing such plans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 7

Whereas, the Sixtieth Idaho Legislature passed Senate Joint Memorial 106, sponsored by the office of Governor C.L. ''Butch'' Otter, calling for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would prevent Congress from passing laws requiring citizens of the United States to participate in any health care insurance program or penalizing them for declining health care coverage; and

Whereas, the Idaho Health Freedom Act codifies as state policy that every person in the State of Idaho is and shall be free from government compulsion in the selection of health insurance options, and that such liberty is protected by the constitutions of the United States and the State of Idaho; and

Whereas, the average Idaho rate increase for 2017 individual Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance plans was 24% and, with the year-over-year increases since the implementation of the ACA federal mandates, health insurance plans have become unaffordable for thousands of Idahoans and their families; and

Whereas, nearly 90,000 Idahoans can afford coverage only with the assistance of an ACA premium assistance tax credit or other subsidy, and Idaho's uninsured includes ''middle class'' individuals and families who earn too much to qualify for federal insurance premium assistance and have no coverage option other than high-cost ACA plans; and

Whereas, the premium amounts for pre-ACA individual transitional ''grandmothered'' plans were 30% to 50% less than those of the individual ACA plans, indicating that a return to state regulation of the individual insurance market would result in significantly lower premium amounts for many Idahoans. and

Whereas, prior to implementation of the ACA, the State of Idaho primarily regulated the Idaho health insurance market and provided aggressive oversight of all aspects of that market and enforced consumer protections as well as ensured a local, responsive regulation for consumers; and

Whereas, prior to the implementation of the ACA-mandated plans, Idaho had a stable and competitive individual insurance market, with among the lowest individual premium amounts in the nation, and consumers could choose from a variety of health insurance coverage options to best cover them and their families; and

Whereas, on January 20, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order to minimize the economic burden of the ACA pending repeal, including instruction to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and to the heads of all other executive departments and agencies with authorities and responsibilities under the act to exercise all authority and discretion available to them to provide greater flexibility to states and to cooperate with them implementing healthcare programs. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that the Idaho Legislature urges President Trump, Secretary Price and Congress to take the following action: Allow individual states to once again serve as the primary regulator of health insurance plans and immediately permit the free market availability and sale of nonsubsidized health insurance plans in accordance with state-established statutes, regulations and rules governing such plans; and be it further

Resolved, That the Idaho Department of Insurance issue guidance allowing for competitive, innovative, nonsubsidized health insurance plans, along with the free market sale of health insurance plans to Idahoans who choose to purchase them, in accordance with state-established statutes, regulations and rules governing such plans; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States, as well as to Governor C.L. ''Butch'' Otter and Director Dean Cameron of the Idaho Department of Insurance.

POM–38. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of California calling upon the United States Congress to reject any effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act unless it is simultaneously replaced with an alternative program that meets the standards clearly and consistently articulated by the President of the United States; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 26

Whereas, Over the first two years of full implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) (Affordable Care Act), California's uninsured rate decreased by half—the largest percentage point decline in the uninsured rate of any state—from 17.2 percent in 2013 to 8.6 percent in 2015, according to the United States Census Bureau, with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicating a further fall to 7.1 percent in the first nine months of 2016; and

Whereas, This decline, from 6.5 million uninsured individuals in 2013 to 3.3 million uninsured individuals in 2015, is a historic accomplishment that reaches across all income levels, geographic regions, and ethnic groups in California; and

Whereas, In June 2016, nearly 3.7 million individuals received coverage through the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid eligibility expansion; and

Whereas, Over 13 million children and adults—approximately one-third of the population—now receive health care coverage through the Medi–Cal program in California; and

Whereas, Since the California Health Benefit Exchange, also known as Covered California, opened its doors, it has cumulatively enrolled 2.5 million people into health care coverage; and

Whereas, Currently, nearly 1.4 million people are enrolled in health care coverage through Covered California, with approximately 90 percent receiving federal subsidies; and

Whereas, The lifeblood of these coverage expansions in California is the federal funding received through the Affordable Care Act; and

Whereas, California's strong consumer protections for health care coverage, access to comprehensive health coverage, including reproductive health care services, and vigorous regulatory system are threatened by the American Health Care Act under consideration in Congress; and

Whereas, The American Health Care Act will result in the elimination of all federal funding for Planned Parenthood, a reduction of tax credits and an increase in premiums for many low- and moderate-income Californians, the elimination of cost-sharing subsidies, a repeal of the Medicaid entitlement to coverage, the elimination of enhanced federal funding for new enrollment in Medi-Cal in 2020 resulting in a massive shift of costs to the state, more uninsured Californians, and fewer Californians receiving affordable coverage; and

Whereas, The American Health Care Act under consideration in Congress provides $600 billion in tax cuts primarily to upper-income individuals, implements an ''age tax'' that allows insurers to charge an older person five times the amount charged to a young adult, and proposes that income-based premium subsidies would be replaced by age-based subsidies that hurt moderate-income individuals and makes insurance unaffordable for all but the least healthy; and

Whereas, Millions of Americans rely on the essential provisions of the Affordable Care Act, including, among others, premium tax credits, cost-sharing subsidies, and easily comparable comprehensive coverage; and

Whereas, Since the Affordable Care Act was passed in March 2010, the United States private sector added over 15,000,000 jobs and set a record for consecutive months of job growth, and

Whereas, Health care policy is extremely complex because it involves the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions of Americans, impacts the national economy in innumerable ways, and involves complex laws and regulations, insurance markets, and consumer protections; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate affirms its strong

support for the Affordable Care Act and calls upon the United States Congress to reject any effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act unless it is simultaneously replaced with an alternative program that meets the standards clearly and consistently articulated by President Trump: that not one American will lose coverage and that coverage will be more affordable and of higher quality for all Americans; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate urges Congress to not jeopardize the health of millions of Americans by pushing through irresponsible policy in late-night hearings, but instead allow for comprehensive public review, '' including evaluations by the Congressional Budget Office and relevant policy committees, so that Americans have their concerns heard; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.

POM–39. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Michigan urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to explore and support policies that will lead to the establishment of facilities within the United States for the reprocessing and recycling of spent nuclear fuel; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 9

Whereas, The federal Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 called for the United States Department of Energy to begin collecting spent nuclear waste and develop a long-term plan for storage of the material. In 2002, Congress approved Yucca Mountain in Nevada as the location to allow the Department of Energy to establish a safe repository for high-level spent nuclear waste; and

Whereas, In 2010, the Department of Energy halted the project at Yucca Mountain when the construction authorization process was in progress, despite the Nuclear Waste Fund receiving more than $30 billion in revenue from electric customers throughout the United States in order to construct the facility and store the spent fuel; and

Whereas, The Argonne National Laboratory has developed a high-temperature method of recycling spent nuclear waste into fuel, known as pyrochemical processing. This process allows 100 times more of the energy in uranium ore to be used to produce electricity compared to current commercial reactors; and

Whereas, Extending the productive life of uranium ore through pyrochemical processing ensures almost inexhaustible supplies of low-cost uranium resources for the generation of electricity, minimizes the risk that used fuel could be stolen and used to produce weapons, and reduces the amount of nuclear waste and the time it must be isolated by almost 1,000 times; and

Whereas, Advanced non-light-water reactors currently under development in the United States and internationally have the potential to utilize used fuel from existing reactors as fuel, but according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, there are no reprocessing facilities currently operating within the United States; and

Whereas, The federal government's inability to adequately store or reprocess almost 100,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel has adversely affected the residents of the state of Michigan. Michigan has paid more than $800 million into the Nuclear Waste Fund since 1983, but the federal government has failed to use it to permanently store nuclear waste in a way that serves the public; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we urge the President and Congress of the United States to explore and support policies that will lead to the establishment of facilities within the United States for the reprocessing and recycling of spent nuclear fuel; be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 190. A bill to provide for consideration of the extension under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of nonapplication of No-Load Mode energy efficiency standards to certain security or life safety alarms or surveillance systems, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–76).

S. 215. A bill to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–77).

S. 226. A bill to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination or ceiling fans using direct current motors from energy conservation standards for external power supplies (Rept. No. 115–78).

S. 239. A bill to amend the National Energy Conservation Policy Act to encourage the increased use of performance contracting in Federal facilities, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–79).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with amendments:

S. 723. A bill to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project (Rept. No. 115–80).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 724. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to modernize authorizations for necessary hydropower approvals (Rept. No. 115–81).

S. 730. A bill to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of certain hydroelectric projects (Rept. No. 115–82).

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with amendments:

S. 734. A bill to extend a project of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission involving the Cannonsville Dam (Rept. No. 115–83).

By Mr. HOEVEN, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 245. A bill to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–84).

S. 343. A bill to repeal certain obsolete laws relating to Indians (Rept. No. 115–85).

By Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1094. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. RISCH for the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

*Althea Coetzee, of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 1210. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce tax rates across the board; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1211. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to undertake remediation oversight of the West Lake Landfill located in Bridgeton, Missouri; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1212. A bill to provide family members of an individual who they fear is a danger to himself, herself, or others, and law enforcement, with new tools to prevent gun violence; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 1213. A bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to post a copy of the most recent response plan for each onshore oil pipeline on a publicly accessible website; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1214. A bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to clarify the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency with respect to certain sporting good articles, and to exempt those articles from a definition under that Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 1215. A bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to allow States that provide foster care for children up to age 21 to serve former foster youths through age 23 under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. COONS):

S. 1216. A bill to clarify that an authorization to use military force, a declaration of war, or any similar authority shall not authorize the detention without charge or trial of a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr.

SCOTT, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 1217. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to provide for appropriate designation of collective bargaining units; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 1218. A bill to promote Federal employment for veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 1219. A bill to provide for stability of title to certain land in the State of Louisiana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1220. A bill to exempt children of certain Filipino World War II veterans from the numerical limitations on immigrant visas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 1221. A bill to counter the influence of the Russian Federation in Europe and Eurasia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 1222. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land to La Paz County, Arizona, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1223. A bill to repeal the Klamath Tribe Judgment Fund Act; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. KAINE:

S. 1224. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to carry out a Community Resilience Grant Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 1225. A bill to support research, development, and other activities to develop innovative vehicle technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 1226. A bill to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to equalize liability and financial assurance requirements for onshore pipeline facilities that could discharge oil into the Great Lakes system with such requirements for offshore pipelines, to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to issue an emergency order directing pipeline owners to comply with existing pipeline operating agreements or acquire sufficient resources to appropriately respond to possible oil spill incidents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1227. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 1228. A bill to require a National Diplomacy and Development Strategy; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. HELLER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. NELSON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. Res. 176. A resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. Res. 177. A resolution congratulating the Webster University chess team for winning a record-breaking fifth consecutive national title at the President's Cup collegiate chess championship in New York City; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. Res. 178. A resolution to authorize testimony, document production , and representation in United States v. Kevin Lee Olson; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 203

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) 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. 251

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) 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. 253

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 253, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 660

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 660, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to fulfill the Federal mandate to provide higher educational opportunities for Native American Indians.

S. 756

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 756, a bill to reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Act to promote international action to reduce marine debris, and for other purposes.

S. 765

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 765, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for penalties for the sale of any Purple Heart awarded to a member of the Armed Forces.

S. 808

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 808, a bill to provide protections for certain sports medicine professionals who provide certain medical services in a secondary State.

S. 926

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 926, a bill to authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

S. 1024

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1024, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1081

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1081, a bill to establish an Employee Ownership and Participation Initiative, and for other purposes.

S. 1082

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1082, a bill to provide for the establishment of the United States Employee Ownership Bank, and for other purposes.

S. 1107

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1107, a bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges, and for other purposes.

S. 1141

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1141, a bill to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

S. 1191

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1191, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to refine how Medicare pays for orthotics and prosthetics and to improve beneficiary experience and outcomes with orthotic and prosthetic care, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 109

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 109, a resolution encouraging the Government of Pakistan to release Aasiya Noreen, internationally known as Asia Bibi, and reform its religiously intolerant laws regarding blasphemy.

S. RES. 162

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 162, a resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promoting religious freedom, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 174

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 174, a resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of Lions Clubs International and celebrating the Lions Clubs International for a long history of humanitarian service.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1212. A bill to provide family members of an individual who they fear is a danger to himself, herself, or others, and law enforcement, with new tools to prevent gun violence; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Gun Violence Prevention Order Act of 2017: At this time, I would also like to thank Senators BLUMENTHAL, GILLIBRAND, and MARKEY for cosponsoring this legislation. Their support is sincerely appreciated.

Yesterday marked the 3rd anniversary of the horrific shooting that outraged the community of Isla Vista, California and the Nation. During this attack, the City of Isla Vista was struck by tragedy when 22-year-old Elliot Rodger went on a shooting rampage after fatally stabbing his two roommates and a friend. Armed with a Glock 34 handgun and two SIG Sauer P226 handguns, the assailant drove through the streets of Isla Vista, shooting and killing 3 young students and injuring 14 others near the University of California, Santa Barbara campus before taking his own life. The Isla Vista community was in shock, and we as a nation struggled to comprehend how this tragedy could have been prevented.

As more facts emerged about the assailant, we learned that he had a history of mental health concerns and violent behavior. He had been prescribed medications used to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and at age 18 Rodgers had begun to refuse the mental health treatment he had been receiving. Local deputies had also encountered him several times through conflicts and fights he had with friends and roommates. And less than a month before his deadly rampage, a concerned friend had called a county mental health staff member, and, after speaking with the assailant's mother, law enforcement conducted a welfare check at Rodger's apartment. At that point, Rodger's murderous plot was well underway, and had the police searched his room, they would have found a stockpile of guns and ammunition along with papers detailing his plans to kill. This individual should have never been able to obtain a firearm—and the bill I am introducing today would enable law enforcement and family members to intervene and prevent attackers like this assailant from carrying out atrocious acts of gun violence in the future.

Over 30,000 people die each year from gun violence, and on average, 7 children and teens are killed by guns every day. We know that families and friends are in the best position to recognize early signs of trouble before tragedy occurs. However, family members and law enforcement officials commonly have no legal means of taking preventive steps to stop a troubled individual from committing an act of gun violence before it occurs. To solve this problem, the State of California enacted a law in the aftermath of the Isla Vista attack that enables family members or law enforcement officers to ask a court for a gun violence prevention order.

Modeled on California's existing laws on domestic violence, when a judge believes there is sufficient evidence that an individual is a danger to themselves or others, the gun violence prevention order temporarily prohibits an individual from purchasing firearms or ammunition. And under a higher burden of proof, a court can also issue a warrant to remove any firearms or ammunition already in the individual's possession. Based on this California law and other State laws, the Gun Violence Prevention Order Act of 2017 would create a new law enforcement grant under the Community-Oriented Policing Services Program at the Department of Justice and incentivize States to take intervening measures to prevent gun violence. Specifically, this legislation would ensure that families and others can seek a gun violence prevention order from a court to temporarily stop someone close to them who poses a threat to themselves or others from purchasing a firearm. This legislation also ensures that a court can issue a gun violence prevention warrant requiring law enforcement to take temporary possession of firearms that have already been purchased if the court determines that the individual poses a threat. Because criminal background checks are critical to preventing gun crimes, this legislation also requires the Department of Justice and comparable state law enforcement agencies to keep their background check databases up to date and requires courts to notify these agencies when a gun violence prevention order is issued.

Importantly, this legislation also protects due process rights by providing written notice and multiple opportunities for the court to make independent determinations on the matter.

Additionally, the Department of Justice and State law enforcement agencies would be required to protect the affected individual's confidentiality. Finally, I would like to say a few words about the victims and survivors of the Isla Vista attack and what this legislation means to their community. Many of the victims and survivors of this attack were students and young adults. They had their whole lives ahead of them. As communities across California and our Nation mark the third anniversary of this terrible tragedy, let us remember the lives of Weihan Wang, Cheng Yuan Hong, George Chen, Veronika Weiss, Katherine Cooper, and Christopher Michaels-Martinez. The

families of these victims will never be the same again, and I will never forget hearing their stories in the aftermath of this attack. As a mother and grandmother, I cannot imagine the pain they have gone through. As the elected leaders of this body, we must never forget what happened in Isla Vista and take steps to keep our communities safe from the gun violence that continues to endanger them. We have seen the costs of inaction, and the Gun Violence Prevention Order Act of 2017 is a step we can take to protect communities across America and ensure that other communities do not experience the pain that Isla Vista went through. I hope my colleagues will join me in remembering the victims of this attack and supporting this legislation.

By Mr. KAINE:

S. 1224. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to carry out a Community Resilience Grant Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to authorize a game-changing scale of investment in making America's infrastructure more resilient to natural disasters.

The BUILD Resilience Act would build on the National Disaster Resilience Competition first authorized in the 2013 Hurricane Sandy emergency supplemental disaster package. It would authorize $1 billion a year over 5 years to jumpstart large-scale investment in community resilience—supporting jobs, strengthening infrastructure, and reducing risk to communities from disasters like hurricanes and flooding.

This bill aims to follow the ''ounce of prevention'' principle. Cleaning up after a disaster is important, but if we invest in sturdier infrastructure before the disaster, there will be less to clean up after the disaster. This is borne out in two separate studies. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that every $1 invested upfront in resilient infrastructure saves $3 on the back end. The Multihazard Mitigation Council of the National Institute of Building Sciences estimates $4 of benefit.

The Sandy Competition supported resilience projects in low-lying coastal areas of Virginia and Louisiana; in Sandy-affected areas of New York and New Jersey, in flood-prone Midwest regions like Iowa and North Dakota, and elsewhere. But Virginia's grant illustrates the scale of the challenge. This grant is supporting innovative flood-control projects but only in two at-risk neighborhoods of Norfolk, which is only one part of a broader Hampton Roads region. Neighboring localities like Newport News and Chesapeake submitted proposals to address their own infrastructure needs, but funding was insufficient. Since there will always be risk of another devastating storm, we must learn from Sandy and take steps now to protect our communities later. This bill tries to do that.

With a range from 1½ to 7 feet of sea level rise projected by the year 2100, the Hampton Roads region is the second largest population center at risk from sea level rise in the Nation, behind only New Orleans. Residents are dealing with skyrocketing flood insurance premiums and flooding not only after a Sandy or a Matthew but from ordinary rainstorms. This is a direct Federal responsibility given the presence of the largest concentration of naval power in the world. An ODU study estimates that the main Norfolk city road leading into Naval Station Norfolk could be inundated by the tides a few hours per day by midcentury. That makes this not only an infrastructure issue but a national security issue.

I hope to work with the White House and Congress to advance a comprehensive infrastructure package that rises to this challenge.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 176—COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REUNIFICATION OF JERUSALEM

Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. HELLER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. NELSON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 176

Whereas June 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War and the reunification of the city of Jerusalem;

Whereas there has been a continuous Jewish presence in Jerusalem for 3 millennia;

Whereas Jerusalem is a holy city and the home for people of the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian faiths;

Whereas, for 3,000 years, Jerusalem has been Judaism's holiest city and the focal point of Jewish religious devotion;

Whereas, from 1948 to 1967, Jerusalem was a divided city, and Israeli citizens of all faiths as well as Jews of all nationalities were denied access to holy sites in eastern Jerusalem, including the Old City, in which the Western Wall is located;

Whereas, in 1967, Jerusalem was reunited by Israel during the conflict known as the Six Day War;

Whereas, since 1967, Jerusalem has been a united city, and persons of all religious faiths have access to holy sites within the city;

Whereas this year marks the 50th year that Jerusalem has been administered as a united city in which the rights of all faiths have been respected and protected;

Whereas the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104–45), which became law on November 8, 1995, states that Jerusalem should remain the undivided capital of Israel in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected; and

Whereas it is the longstanding policy of the United States Government that a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved through direct, bilateral negotiations without preconditions for a sustainable two-state solution: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 50th Anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem and extends its friendship and hopes for peace to the residents of Jerusalem and the people of Israel;

(2) reaffirms its support for Israel's commitment to religious freedom and administration of holy sites in Jerusalem;

(3) continues to support strengthening the mutually beneficial American-Israeli relationship;

(4) commends Egypt and Jordan, former combatant states of the Six Day War, who in subsequent years embraced a vision of peace and coexistence with Israel and have continued to uphold their respective peace agreements;

(5) reaffirms that it is the longstanding, bipartisan policy of the United States Government that the permanent status of Jerusalem remains a matter to be decided between the parties through final status negotiations towards a two-state solution; and

(6) reaffirms the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104–45) as United States law, and calls upon the President and all United States officials to abide by its provisions.

SENATE RESOLUTION 177—CONGRATULATING THE WEBSTER UNIVERSITY CHESS TEAM FOR WINNING A RECORD-BREAKING FIFTH CONSECUTIVE NATIONAL TITLE AT THE PRESIDENT'S CUP COLLEGIATE CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP IN NEW YORK CITY

Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 177

Whereas Webster University is the first team in the history of the President's Cup collegiate chess championship to win 5 consecutive national titles;

Whereas the 2017 victory is the seventh consecutive national championship for Grandmaster and coach Susan Polgar and the program at the Susan Polgar Institute for Chess Excellence;

Whereas Webster University is a leader in promoting chess as a vehicle for enriching the education of children and young adults; and

Whereas Webster University has become a hub for developing chess excellence in students from across the United States and around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Webster University for winning a record-breaking fifth consecutive national title at the President's Cup collegiate chess championship; and

(2) encourages Webster University to continue promoting the educational benefits of chess among its students and the larger community.

SENATE RESOLUTION 178—TO AUTHORIZE TESTIMONY, DOCUMENT PRODUCTION, AND REPRESENTATION IN UNITED STATES V. KEVIN LEE OLSON

Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and the distinguished Democratic leader, Mr. SCHUMER, I send to the desk a resolution authorizing the production of testimony and

documents, and representation by the Senate Legal Counsel, and ask for its immediate consideration.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this resolution concerns a request for testimony and documents in a criminal action pending in North Dakota federal district court. In this action, the defendant is charged with sending to Senator HEITKAMP an e-mail threatening to kill or injure her. A trial is scheduled for June 6, 2017.

The prosecution is seeking for introduction into evidence at trial documentary evidence from the Senator's office, including the e-mail at issue, as well as testimony from the Senator's correspondence manager. Senator HEITKAMP would like to cooperate by providing such relevant evidence. The enclosed resolution would authorize that staffer, and any other current or former employee of the Senator's office from whom relevant evidence may be necessary, to testify and produce documents in this action, with representation by the Senate Legal Counsel.

S. RES. 178

Whereas, in the case of *United States v. Kevin Lee Olson*, Cr. No. 17–26, pending in the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota, the prosecution has requested the production of testimony and documents from Kobye Noel, an employee in the Washington, D.C. office of Senator Heidi Heitkamp;

Whereas, pursuant to sections 703(a) and 704(a)(2) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, 2 U.S.C. §§288b(a) and 288c(a)(2), the Senate may direct its counsel to represent current or former employees of the Senate with respect to any subpoena, order, or request for testimony relating to their official responsibilities;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may, by the judicial or administrative process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate; and

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may promote the administration of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Kobye Noel, an employee in the Office of Senator Heidi Heitkamp, and any other current or former employee of the Senator's office from whom relevant evidence may be necessary, are authorized to testify and produce documents in the case of *United States v. Kevin Lee Olson*, except concerning matters for which a privilege should be asserted.

SEC. 2. The Senate Legal Counsel is authorized to represent current and former employees of Senator Heitkamp's office in connection with the production of evidence authorized in section one of this resolution.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 217. Mr. SULLIVAN (for Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1238, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 217. Mr. SULLIVAN (for Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1238, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 4, lines 1 and 2, strike ''relating to food and agriculture'' and insert ''or the Secretary of Health and Human Services''.

On page 4, strike line 3 and all that follows through the end of the matter following line 6 and insert the following:

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) by striking the items relating to sections 523, 524, 525, 526, and 527; and

(2) by inserting after the item relating to section 522 the following:

''Sec. 523. Guidance and recommendations.
''Sec. 524. Voluntary private sector preparedness accreditation and certification program.
''Sec. 525. Acceptance of gifts.
''Sec. 526. Integrated public alert and warning system modernization.
''Sec. 527. National planning and education.
''Sec. 528. Coordination of Department of Homeland Security efforts related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism.''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at 10 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing titled ''Border Insecurity: The Rise of MS–13 and Other Transnational Criminal Organizations.''

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on May 24, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.'' The witness list is attached.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate today, May 24, 2017, off the floor at the start of the first scheduled vote to conduct a business meeting on the following:

—The nomination of Althea H. Coetzee to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, in SR–418 at 2:30 p.m. to consider S. 1094, the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017.

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2017 from 2:30 p.m.–4 p.m., in room SH–219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

The Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in open session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in open and closed sessions.

COMMITTEE ON THE SUBCOMMITTEE JUDICIARY ON CRIME AND TERRORISM

The Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on May 24, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Law Enforcement Access to Data Stored Across Borders: Facilitating Cooperation and Protecting Rights.''

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA, THE PACIFIC AND INTERNATIONAL CYBERSECURITY POLICY

The Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, The Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2017 at 2:15 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''American Leadership in the Asia-Pacific, Part 2: Economic Issue.''

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION, PRODUCT SAFETY, INSURANCE, AND DATA SECURITY

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold Subcommittee Hearing on ''Pool Safety: The Tenth Anniversary of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act.''

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that that my intern, Kelsey Sherman, be granted privileges of the floor for the balance of the day.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Olivia Rockwell, Brian Larkin, Elizabeth Isbey, Benjamin Willis, and Elizabeth Jurinka, legislative fellows in my office, be given floor privileges for the remainder of this Congress.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the vote on confirmation of Judge Thapar occur at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 25; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

CONGRATULATING THE WEBSTER UNIVERSITY CHESS TEAM FOR WINNING A RECORD-BREAKING FIFTH CONSECUTIVE NATIONAL TITLE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 177, submitted earlier today.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 177) congratulating the Webster University chess team for winning a record-breaking fifth consecutive national title at the President's Cup collegiate chess championship in New York City.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 177) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY, DOCUMENT PRODUCTION, AND REPRESENTATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 178, submitted earlier today.

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

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 178) to authorize testimony, document production, and representation in United States v. Kevin Lee Olson.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 178) was agreed to.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., Thursday, May 25; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Thapar nomination; finally, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Thapar nomination.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators MANCHIN, SULLIVAN, and MERKLEY.

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the concerns of the good people of my great State of West Virginia, about their healthcare and the needs they have. If the American Health Care Act is passed, which is the Republican plan that was passed over in the House, many West Virginians are going to lose their current insurance coverage.

Individuals on Medicaid expansion would not be guaranteed coverage after 2020. That means that for anybody that has gotten insurance for the first time, there is no guarantee they can keep it at all past 2020. The American Hospital Association estimates that 68,200 West Virginians would lose their Medicaid coverage in 2018, and another 126,000 people who currently have it would be without Medicaid coverage by 2026.

The American Health Care Act, which is being sent by our friends in the House—our Republican friends in the House—increases the cost to our State. The bill cuts $834 billion from Medicaid, meaning that the State would receive less Federal Medicaid funding, and it would not increase if costs rise in the case of health crises.

In fact, the American Hospital Association estimates that my State of West Virginia would lose a total of $9.8 billion over the next 10 years—$9.8 billion over the next 10 years alone in my great State. With all of the hard work they have done, to go without healthcare is unbelievable.

This bill would also increase costs for older, sicker, poorer, rural West Virginians. We have this type of a population in all of our States. Older Americans would face higher costs because insurance companies could charge them five times more than younger beneficiaries—five times more. So if a young beneficiary is paying $2,500 a year, they can end up paying $10,000, $12,000 a year. That would increase the costs to older Americans nationally by anywhere from $2,000 to $8,400.

We did this little comparison here of what that would actually look like. Let's say there is a low-income senior, somebody who hasn't gotten to Medicare eligibility yet because of their age, and they are over the 138th percentile of the poverty guidelines, and they are paying about $1,700 now for their insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

With this piece of legislation, they are going to pay upwards of $13,000—$13,000, which they don't have. The cost to purchase insurance for low-income seniors in West Virginia who buy insurance on the exchanges, as I just showed you, could go up to almost 800 percent—800 percent of the costs they are paying.

So today I am going to share the story of a West Virginian who is concerned about losing her healthcare. This West Virginia native is Stephanie Fredricksen. She told me her story at a townhall that we had in the Eastern Panhandle in March. She asked me to make sure I shared this story with all of you. This will be printed in the RECORD. So this is going to be Stephanie's story. This is one of many stories throughout my State of West Virginia:

My name is Stephanie Fredricksen and back in April 2016, I woke up one day unable to turn my head due to stiffness in my neck and terrible pain. At first I thought I had just slept on it wrong and it would go away. By early May, the pain had spread to every joint in my body.

Then, I began to experience painful spasms in my back, my shoulders, my neck, and even my jaw. I started having blurred vision and shooting pain in my eyes. I also began suffering from extreme exhaustion, on really bad days activities as simple as getting out

of bed, getting dressed, and brushing my hair can tire me out for hours. I could go on and on with a long list of other horrible symptoms.

My illness began to affect my job as a Property & Casualty Insurance Agent. I started missing more and more time from work, first due to doctor appointments and then due to the worsening of my symptoms. Eventually, I was forced to file a claim for long-term disability insurance. I had been undergoing multiple tests and examinations and I thought the physicians would soon determine what was wrong and prescribe the appropriate treatment so I could get back my life and get back to work.

That never happened. During this time I had physical therapy and after a couple of weeks of treatment I was able to move my neck again. But by August, I was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus, Systemic Sclerosis, Osteoarthritis and Severe Spinal Stenosis among other related conditions. Although my employer assured me they had my back, in October, I received a certified letter from an attorney advising me that my employment had been terminated.

As a result, I lost my healthcare coverage and was offered COBRA coverage for a period of only three months.

On February 1, 2017, I became one of millions who rely on the Affordable Care Act (ACA). I was already familiar with the ACA because my husband had been covered by it since 2012.

My husband works for a small business that doesn't offer health insurance. The ACA was about $350 less than for him to be added to my former employers's plan. Some of you may be thinking after hearing about some of my conditions that they aren't life ending but you would be wrong.

I suffer from autoimmune diseases. My immune system attacks my own body instead of resisting hostile foreign invaders. So my immune system will not fight off but will actually help the bad things to spread and become even stronger.

In approximately 50 percent of people with Systemic Lupus a major organ or tissue in the body such as the heart, lungs, kidneys or brain will become affected.

Between 10 and 15 percent of Lupus patients will die prematurely. However, it is widely believed that number is substantially underreported. Many deaths are reported as a result of the complications such as kidney failure and not the Lupus itself.

1 in 3 patients with Lupus also have another autoimmune disease. I fall into that category having been diagnosed with Systemic Sclerosis as well. Systemic Sclerosis can also involve the heart, kidneys, lungs, liver and brain. Internal organ complications are common and are often not symptomatic until the late stages of disease, thus routine screening is essential. Lung involvement is the leading cause of death.

She shared her story and much more with me at a townhall in Martinsburg. She asked me to read this on the Senate floor. She asked me to share her story because she has tried to share it with all of the elected officials herself, not just for herself but also for the protected 24 million Americans who are at risk of losing their insurance if the Affordable Care Act is repealed and replaced with the American Health Care Act, the act that was just passed in the House which is being sent to the Senate.

So she is asking us: Please, do not pass this. Do not repeal the ACA but fix it. We all know it needs to be repaired. The private market needs to be fixed, not to mention those who will no longer be able to afford it with the premiums going up, especially for the older, poorer senior citizens.

I obviously have pre-existing conditions, no job, and my husband's job does not offer health insurance. In other words, without the ACA, I would not be able to get the insurance I need so badly. I also fear that based on numbers provided by the CBO, if insurance is still available to me, I won't be able to afford it and of course there is also my husband's insurance to worry about.

At the same time many young and healthy people chose to take a gamble believing like we all do when we're young that nothing bad is ever going to happen to us.

As a result, the ACA risk pool was not as diverse as it should have been. Robust participation is so critical to ensuring citizens have access to and a real choice in affordable coverage. Imagine if those that oppose the ACA actually got behind it for the good of the country.

The ACA even with all of its opposition helped millions and it appears that the American people realize this, even many that were originally fooled by the negative rhetoric have decided they want to keep it. Please do what is right for us the citizens that have chosen each of you to represent us.

As I pointed out earlier, many of those people have come around to a different way of thinking as of late and I wouldn't be so sure that they will be there for you the next time when they vote if you have taken away their health care or their parents, siblings, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, neighbors, friends, church members, coworkers, classmates, and so on. Of course we can't forget that a lot of those people will die as a result of not being able to keep their health care as well.

Putting your politics, egos, agendas, and parties aside in this case will actually save human lives. I ask you all not to repeal and replace the ACA and instead to work together to fix it and make improvements.

Please don't allow the CEOs of insurance companies and the wealthiest Americans to make even more money at the expense of those Americans who are the most vulnerable, like the disabled, the sick, the elderly and those with lower incomes.

I beg of you, PLEASE oppose the repeal of the ACA and please oppose any plan that could leave me and millions like me without health insurance or that will increase our premiums or deductibles or reduce or eliminate any current coverage. Our lives are depending on it and we are depending on you.

So, as I have promised, I have read this letter, Stephanie's story. I am hoping that Stephanie is listening and watching, but also for all the people that she represents—people who have serious illnesses, who are going to be left out or who are afraid they are going to be left out, elderly people who are going to not be able to afford insurance.

There are a lot of things that we can do, but one thing that we can all be doing is working together as Republicans and Democrats and putting our country first and people in our States and fixing this. We know it needs to be fixed. Get off the political rhetoric and quit blaming each other and sit down and say: OK, this needs to be repaired. This private market doesn't work the way it was intended to.

We need to get more young people involved. We need the market forces to work. We need for everyone who has insurance for the first time to use it in the most efficient, effective, and appropriate way. There is a lot that can be done, but not just by taking political votes and holding each other in harm's way.

I thank you for allowing me to tell Stephanie's story. I hope it helps. I can't wait to sit down and start working with all of our colleagues in this body.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY, DOCUMENT PRODUCTION, AND REPRESENTATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble to S. Res. 178 be agreed to.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

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

SECURING OUR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1238 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1238) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Roberts amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 217) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To preserve the authority of the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services and make a technical correction)

On page 4, lines 1 and 2, strike "relating to food and agriculture" and insert "or the Secretary of Health and Human Services".

On page 4, strike line 3 and all that follows through the end of the matter following line 6 and insert the following:

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) by striking the items relating to sections 523, 524, 525, 526, and 527; and

(2) by inserting after the item relating to section 522 the following:

''Sec. 523. Guidance and recommendations.
''Sec. 524. Voluntary private sector preparedness accreditation and certification program.
''Sec. 525. Acceptance of gifts.
''Sec. 526. Integrated public alert and warning system modernization.
''Sec. 527. National planning and education.
''Sec. 528. Coordination of Department of Homeland Security efforts related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism.''.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 1238), as amended, was passed.

NORTH KOREA

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to talk this evening about a very serious threat to the United States; that is, the threat from North Korea and what we in the Congress should be doing about it.

Now, over the weekend we saw another piece of news about how the North Korean regime is again testing missiles, testing for intercontinental ballistic missiles, more missile launches, literally two in the last 2 weeks.

I would say this is one of the most serious threats facing the United States of America right now because what has now become clear, it is no longer if Kim Jong Un and the North Korean regime will have the ability to range the United States of America with an intercontinental ballistic nuclear missile. It is no longer if. It is when.

This has been stated time and time again in open hearings we have had on the Armed Services Committee with generals and some of the top experts in the United States. It used to be, hey, maybe he would have this capability sometime down the road. Maybe he will never get it. They are not saying that any longer. Think about that. Every American should be thinking about that. It is no longer if but when one of the craziest dictators in the world will have the capability to launch an intercontinental ballistic nuclear missile. It is not just ranging my State, the great State of Alaska, which unfortunately for me and my constituents is in the line of fire earlier than other States or Hawaii, which faces similar risks to Alaska, but we are talking about the continental United States. We are talking about Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles. It is not if but when.

So yesterday in front of the Armed Services Committee, the Director of National Intelligence, our good friend, former Senator Dan Coats, when I asked him and General Stewart, the top military officer for our intelligence agencies, when they thought this was going to happen—well, it is a classified number and it is a classified time. I actually think it should be unclassified, given their estimates, to let the American people know what is coming because it is probably a lot sooner, at least in the estimates, than most people think. So that is what we are facing right now, and people should be concerned about it.

Let me give you a little bit more on the facts of this. Kim Jong Un, the leader of North Korea, the unstable dictator of North Korea, has publicly stated it is his goal to develop a nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile that can strike the continental United States. Now, let's just be clear. This is a man who starves his own citizens, sentences them by the tens of thousands to inhumane labor camps, and just a month ago allegedly assassinated his half-brother in a Malaysian airport with poison to kill him.

In fact, since assuming power just 5 years ago, as my next chart shows, Kim Jong Un has conducted more missile tests and twice as many nuclear tests as both his father and grandfather did in their 60 years of ruling over North Korea. Look at these numbers: That is the Kim Jong Un regime, Kim Jong Il, Kim Il Sung. So he is focused on this more than his father and grandfather were. As I mentioned, it seems almost daily there is another one of these missile tests or even nuclear tests.

Now, one of the things you see in the press sometimes is, well, some of these missile tests are failing. There have been failures, and there have been notable successes, such as the country's first intermediate range ballistic missile, its first submarine launch ballistic missile, its first solid fuel launch missile, and its ability to put satellites in space. This is actual progress. This is significant progress.

On the nuclear side, the country's fifth test—and Kim Jong Un's third—had an estimated yield in terms of its power of 15 to 20 kilotons, approximately the size of the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima. While this yield was not as large as they were expecting, the test again on the nuclear side shows steady progress in their nuclear program and steady progress in their ballistic missile program.

So what does all this mean? Why is Kim Jong Un testing so often? Even though he fails, he is still learning. That is exactly what the commander of U.S. Strategic Command said last month during a Senate Armed Services hearing.

Gen. John Hyten stated: North Korea is going fast. Test, fail, test, fail, succeed. They are learning, and as you can see them learning, they are developing the capabilities for intercontinental ballistic missiles. That is how it works in the rocket business.

That is happening right now. That is happening right now. That is in the news right now.

Also in the news is what the United States has been doing to protect our allies from this and other threats. So let me give you an example. There has been a lot of news about the THAAD deployment, a missile defense system in South Korea deployed by the U.S. Army to protect our troops and South Korea's citizens, to protect our troops in Korea, protect our troops in Japan, and to protect our allies. Now, I am very supportive of this—very supportive of this.

The President is on his Middle East trip. He is going to Europe now. He mentioned just a few days ago maybe having a THAAD system in Saudi Arabia, an American system to help protect the Saudis from the Iranian missile threat. Again, I am very supportive.

As the Presiding Officer knows, in our last National Defense Authorization Act, we had significant authorization and funding to help Israel protect itself with a missile defense system, the Iron Dome system, where we have been working with the Israelis to help their citizens be protected against an Iranian missile threat.

Again, I support all of these. I applaud these efforts, I have supported them, I voted for them, but it does beg the question that some of my constituents back home in Alaska are beginning to ask, and I am sure other Americans are asking in every State in the country: What about us? What about the United States? What about the U.S. homeland? Isn't that where Kim Jong Un said he wants to launch intercontinental ballistic nuclear missiles? It is. It is exactly where he said he wants to do it.

The bottom line is, we need to do much more to protect ourselves. We need to do much more to protect the United States of America. Yes, we need to protect our allies, but we need to start focusing a little bit more on home, and we need to start focusing now.

In fact, if we know this threat is coming, which we do—there has been testimony after testimony—I think it would be the height of irresponsibility to not start working on increasing America's homeland missile defense. That is what we should be doing.

That is why I have introduced a very bipartisan bill called the Advancing America's Missile Defense Act of 2017. Again, Republicans and Democrats are already on the bill. I believe the Presiding Officer is now a cosponsor.

I would like to paint a scenario that we all know will happen unfortunately sometime in the future—again, on why this bill is so important, why what we need to be doing on missile defense is so important.

Just think through the headline. Let's assume a couple years down the road Kim Jong Un has this capability to launch an intercontinental nuclear

ballistic missile to hit a lower 48 city. Well, we know that is going to start leaking out. The headlines will be front page, banner headlines: Dictator of North Korea can range Chicago, New York. It will be all over the news. It will be the only thing we talk about.

There will be enormous pressure on the White House and others to do something about this. On that day when we see the banner headlines, a lot of Americans will be very nervous. The American people and the American media will look at the people in the Pentagon, will look at the people in Congress, will look at the leadership in the White House, and will ask three critical questions. Are we safe? Did we see this coming? Have we been doing anything about it and, if so, what? That is what they are going to ask.

We know that day is coming. We are not sure when, but we know that day is coming—again, not if, but when. People are going to ask those questions. If we know that, and we do, we need to be able to say to all three of those questions—whether it is the Secretary of Defense, the President of the United States, or whether it is all of us here, the Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, we need to be able to answer the American people and say: Yes, we are safe; yes, we saw this coming; and yes, we have the world's most robust, technologically advanced, capable missile defense system that will with near certainty shoot down any North Korean missile launch at the United States and give our President and the Congress the strategic time and space to make potentially world-altering decisions.

We know this is coming, and I think we should be doing everything we can in our power to focus on it, so we will be safe, and we will be able to say yes to all three of those questions if we begin to seriously focus on America's missile defense, which is what our legislation is all about.

Unfortunately, our Nation has not always been focused on funding our missile defense system, and in many ways the funding has been erratic. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies put it recently, such funding for America's missile defense has been marked by high ambition, followed by increasing modesty. I think the time for modesty on an issue of this importance is over.

From 2006 to 2016, homeland missile defense funding, adjusted for inflation, declined nearly 50 percent, and homeland missile defense testing declined more than 83 percent. The goal of our bill is to change that and change it significantly. Among its other elements, Advancing America's Missile Defense Act will grow our U.S. base missile interceptors from what we have now, which is about 44, to as many as 72 and will require our military to look at having up to 100 interceptors distributed across the United States.

The bill will also authorize the more rapid deployment of new and better kill vehicles. These are the bullets, essentially, on top of the warheads. It will allow a layer of space-based sensors and radars to track missile threats from launch to intercept, a technological advancement that would improve all missile systems to make sure we have a layered missile defense, whether it is THAAD in Asia, Aegis Ashore and on ships, or our missile system here at home—all of it integrated. Right now we don't have that.

The bill also will increase the pace of missile defense testing to allow U.S. forces to learn from actual launches of our defense systems and increase the confidence we have in our system and its effectiveness. This is very important. The Department of Defense needs to change the culture around missile defense, testing regularly and conducting more flight tests. Unfortunately, every test is not always going to be a success. It is OK to fail because we learn from failure.

I don't like to admit on the floor of the U.S. Senate that we could learn something from the North Koreans, but that is the approach they are taking. That is why their missile and nuclear programs are advancing so rapidly. They are not afraid to fail.

What we need to do is enhance our testing, enhance our missile defense, enhance our capabilities because, as I mentioned at the outset, it is no longer if, but when. That day is coming, and we need to be ready for it, and the United States Senate can lead in addressing this very significant challenge to America's national security.

I am encouraged that our bill has already gotten strong bipartisan support from Democrats and Republicans because they know how important it is. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle truly understand the significance and seriousness of this threat, and I hope they can continue to support our Advancing America's Missile Defense Act of 2017. There are very few foreign policy and national security issues that are more important than making sure we address this threat to America's security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, our Nation and our government were founded on a principle that can be summed up in three words: ''We the People,'' the first three words of our Constitution, the three words that our Founders wrote in supersized font so that no matter who you were you would remember that this is the guiding mission of our form of government. This is the guiding mission of the Constitution.

From across the room, you can't read the fine print of article I and article II and so forth, but you can see what the Constitution is all about: we the people.

Lincoln captured that notion when he spoke in his Gettysburg Address and said: ''We are a nation of the people, by the people, and for the people.'' He didn't describe our system of government as of, by, and for the privileged. Our Founders didn't write ''We, the powerful and privileged'' at the start of our Constitution. That is what makes us different from the governments that dominated Europe, where the rich and powerful governed on behalf of the rich and powerful. America turned that on its head with our system of government. Our system of democratic republic governance.

Therefore, we are at a very strange moment right now because just 20 days ago, 217 Members, a small majority over in the House, voted for a bill that was all about government of and by the powerful, for the powerful, of and by the privileged, for the privileged, not by the people, for the people. They voted for TrumpCare.

We witnessed the House passing this horrific piece of legislation that will ensure that millions of low-income and middle-class Americans are worse off, will receive less care, and will have to pay more for their healthcare, assuming they can even get it. But, on the other hand, the bill delivers $600 billion in platinum-plated tax benefits to the richest Americans.

Picture the situation: our President holding a celebration at the White House, standing on a platform, crushing more than 20 million people in terms of their access to healthcare, while celebrating a golden plate with platinum-plated gifts to the wealthiest Americans. That is what happened 20 days ago in the House of Representatives. That is not a pretty sight and certainly doesn't fit the mission of our Nation.

Franklin Roosevelt shared his vision of how we progress in the following fashion. He said: ''The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have little.''

But the Trump principle that was supported by 217 House Members 20 days ago is the opposite. The Trump principle is that the test of our progress is whether we add more to the abundance of those who have most, while taking away from those who do not have enough. That is what happened. That is the difference between Franklin Roosevelt and government of, by, and for the people, and President Trump and 217 House Members who passed a bill of, by, and for the powerful and the privileged.

It is astonishing to me that this happened. American citizens, when they heard about the first version of this bill, TrumpCare 1.0, they overflowed the inboxes, they proceeded to fill the streets, they flooded the phone lines, and people up here heard them and said: We understand. We don't have the votes to pass this TrumpCare 1.0 in the House because we hear you telling us how horrific this bill is.

So they went back to work. But in TrumpCare 2.0 they produced a bill that is even worse than TrumpCare 1.0. They took an already bad bill, they made it more painful and more damaging, and they jammed it through without a hearing on the House side. They jammed it through without a CBO estimate of how many people it would hurt or what it would cost. They jammed it through because they didn't want to listen to the American people who said: What you are doing is diabolical and wrong. They didn't want to listen to the experts who said the same thing.

The experts weighed in from every direction—nonpartisans and analysts, health policy experts, the associations that work in healthcare, the groups that represent doctors, nurses, and patients. The American Medical Association said: ''We are deeply concerned that the AHCA,'' which I will simply call TrumpCare to keep away the confusion—''We are deeply concerned that TrumpCare would result in millions of Americans losing their current health insurance coverage,'' and that ''nothing in the MacArthur amendment remedies the shortcomings of the underlying bill.''

The AARP called the bill ''a bad deal for older Americans ages 50–64,'' because it ''would significantly increase premiums for all older adults and spike costs dramatically for lower- and moderate-income older adults.''

The AARP went on to state that the amendment that converted TrumpCare 1.0 into TrumpCare 2.0 was making ''a bad bill worse'' because it ''establishes state waivers that allow insurance companies to charge older Americans and people with preexisting health conditions higher premiums and weaken critical consumer protections.''

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network weighed in; the American Diabetes Association weighed in; the American Academy of Pediatrics weighed in; the American Heart Association; the American Lung Association; the March of Dimes and many, many, many other groups that are familiar, household-known organizations. These groups that understand our healthcare system all came out and made it public that this plan, this TrumpCare 2.0, is a bad plan. It endangers Americans' health.

But 217 Members of the House didn't listen. The 217 Members voted for the Trump principle of crushing ordinary Americans to deliver $600 billion in platinum-plated benefits to the richest Americans. If the House had listened and put that bill 6 feet under with a stake through its heart, I wouldn't be standing here today, but they sent that bill over to the Senate. It is here for the Senate to consider. There are 100 Senators who now have to decide: Are they behind the principle of ''we the people,'' or have they decided that they want a different constitution—one that is about ''we the privileged'' and ''we the powerful''?

I know that when I took my oath of office, I liked the Constitution the way it was written. I liked the principle behind this Constitution. So it is of major concern that the Senate might proceed to adopt TrumpCare 2.0 or modify it into TrumpCare 3.0.

Today, the Congressional Budget Office's score was released, which told us of and evaluated TrumpCare 2.0. It found that more than 20 million Americans—in its estimate, 23 million to be exact—will be uninsured under TrumpCare than under the Affordable Care Act. That would bring the total of uninsured to a much higher total of 51 million people under the age of 65 by the year 2026—nearly double the number of uninsured. That hurts real people. It hurts every single one of those individuals who lose their healthcare.

In my State of Oregon, just one piece, one provision of this bill, which crushes the expansion of Medicaid—in Oregon, it is the Oregon Health Plan—strips the healthcare of about 400,000 Oregonians. That is a lot of human carnage. It is enough people that, if they were standing hand to hand, they would stretch 400 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the border with Idaho. That is how many Oregonians would be impacted by this.

That is just the people who lose access to healthcare. There are many others who would go to their clinics or go to their hospitals and find that the clinics and hospitals have either limited their services or shut down because, you see, our clinics have gained tremendously from the investment under ObamaCare. In addition, they have gained tremendously from the fact that the people who came in the door had insurance to pay their bills. It is the reduction in uninsured individuals who come through the door—the ones who cannot pay for their care—that has dropped so much. With more people paying for their care, the finances of the clinics and the hospitals are stronger. So TrumpCare not only hurts the 23 million who will lose insurance, but it hurts everybody, every American, by degrading our clinics and degrading our hospitals.

Individuals share their stories and their concerns, people like Lauren Rizzo in Portland. She is a single mother and small business owner who is alive today thanks to the health insurance she received through ObamaCare.

About 2 years ago, Lauren was not feeling well, so she went to get checked out at a clinic. Lauren figured she would be given a prescription for antibiotics and sent on her way. Instead, she was told to head straight to the emergency room, where she received emergency surgery to remove a 7½-inch mass from her abdomen. If Lauren had not gotten insurance through the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, she would not have gotten checked out, and she certainly could not have afforded the $40,000 surgery bill and the nearly $60,000 in followup care without going bankrupt. Very likely, without insurance, she would have had this mass continue to grow in her abdomen and maybe threaten her life. This may have been a life-and-death issue for her.

Here is what Lauren has to say in her own words:

> I am a healthy and contributing member of society who is able to contribute and pay my way and continue to grow and succeed rather than someone who is slipping through the cracks and needing assistance to get by. It seems to me that turning people who are getting by into people who are falling behind is good for no one. Even if there is no compassion in our leadership's healthcare plan, I would have hoped someone would have injected a note of common sense.

Her point, made very poetically and poignantly, is that if you cannot get healthcare, you cannot remain a productive member of society. It is not just about your quality of life, and it is not just about the fact that you might suffer and that you might die, it is also about whether you can be healed and contribute. That is an important piece of why healthcare is so important.

Paul Bright of Sweet Home wrote to my office to share his story about finally having healthcare thanks to the Medicaid expansion. Paul wrote:

> I'm one of those hardworking Americans the Republicans praise mightily—an entrepreneur, self-employed, buying American—and I'm on Medicaid thanks to the ACA.
>
> Without the ACA—that is ObamaCare—I'd have no insurance at all to cover my prescriptions that keep me healthy so I can continue to work.
>
> Do I want to be making so little income that I qualify for Medicaid? No. I want to be making a good income.
>
> The only way I can continue working 60 hours a week to increase my household income is if I can keep my prescriptions and doctor appointments.
>
> Without the medicine I need, I will become permanently dependent on government services, not just health insurance, but I will start requiring food stamps, housing assistance, utilities assistance.

He concludes:

> The smart economic decision is to keep me healthy so I can grow our economy.

Paul is right. Keeping him healthy isn't just the moral thing to do, it is a smart economic decision. Yet, under TrumpCare 2.0, Paul probably would not stay healthy because he would not be able to afford the appointments and he would not be able to afford the prescriptions. He would fall through the cracks.

Then there is a grandmother in Lake Oswego, OR, who wrote to me about her 12-year-old grandson who is living with a neurological disorder and who has been hospitalized three times over the past 5 years. The first time this woman's grandson was hospitalized at the age of 8, his father's insurance covered a 3-week hospital stay. At the time, that was enough to get the care he needed. But then we fast-forward to last year. Her grandson, now 12, needed to be hospitalized for several weeks, followed by residential treatment, followed by a brief period in a transitional school—a 10-month period in

total. Those 10 months were covered because of ObamaCare, because of the ACA. For the past several months, this young boy has been home and recovering successfully. The ACA made that possible.

Carol Nelson of Turner, OR, writes to me and shares her words. She does not know how she will manage if her husband is kicked out of his nursing home because of TrumpCare 2.0. She writes:

> My husband lives in a nursing home. He does not remember me after 33 years of marriage. I worry now. Will the new healthcare laws and Medicare, which I will get in 2018, cover us? Will he have to come home for me to take care of him even though I cannot stand for more than a few minutes due to congestive heart failure?

Carol continued:

> I think there should be incentives to do what's best for your health written into the law but not to take it away. Without the ACA, I surely will die.

So here is a woman who has been married to her husband for 33 years, but he has dementia so badly that he does not recognize his wife. She would love to care for him at home, but she cannot. She has congestive heart failure, and his condition is extremely severe.

Medicaid funds more than half of the nursing home admissions in the United States of America. It is not simply about assisting struggling families or hard-working or low-income families; it is also about taking care of our seniors. She has a double challenge—her own care and her husband's care. ''Without the ACA,'' she said, ''I surely will die.''

Should that be the healthcare system we have in the United States and because of which people are at the point of losing their access to healthcare and putting their own lives at stake?

I think back to that issue of peace of mind. In a good healthcare system, all have the peace of mind that their loved ones will get the care when they are sick and that their loved ones will not go bankrupt when they get sick. We have made big strides in that direction. In Oregon, the 400,000 folks who are covered by the expansion of Medicaid alone represent a big stride in that direction, the tens of thousands who have gained access to care on the exchange because they can now get community pricing and not be fended off by a preexisting condition or blocked by a preexisting condition. They have more peace of mind.

We can do better. We could have a much simpler system, and we could have a much more efficient system, but let's not go backward and throw millions and millions of Americans off of healthcare.

Last night, I had the pleasure of speaking with Carol on the phone and talking to her a little more about her life. She told me about the cataract surgery she needed in order to be able to continue to see. She said that without that, she would have lost her license, and if she had not had a license, she could not have gone to the grocery store to feed herself and her son, because they live out in the country—an hour's drive from everything. She told me about the various preexisting conditions she has had to manage—conditions that would certainly prevent her from getting healthcare without her having the ACA, conditions that, without medical appointments and prescriptions, would cause her health to deteriorate rapidly without the ACA. That is what she means when she says: ''I surely will die.''

It is a powerful story, but it is certainly not unique. Every day, I am receiving stories like Carol's—story after story of folks who just want the peace of mind of having access to healthcare—as well as stories from constituents who are angry at President Trump and who are, quite frankly, angry at the 217 Republicans who voted for a government by and for the powerful and privileged over in the House 20 days ago.

They are also upset about the breaking of promises to the American people. They heard the promises over the past campaign year. The President made promise after promise on healthcare, and his healthcare bill breaks promise after promise.

President Trump promised his plan would provide healthcare for all, but it does not. According to the analysis we received just today, 14 million Americans would lose healthcare almost immediately. Within another 10 years, that would grow to about 23 million Americans. That is not healthcare for all; that is healthcare for 23 million fewer. Promise broken.

Over and over again, President Trump said his plan would make healthcare cheaper. The CBO estimates that premiums under TrumpCare 2.0 will go up 20 percent next year. Check this out. Here is the basic math. A 64-year-old man who earns $26,500 a year would have his monthly cost for healthcare go up from about $140 a month to about $1,200 a month. When you are earning $26,500, by the time you pay for your rent and your utilities and your car payment and your groceries, you do not have much left, but you can still get health insurance if it is costing you $140 a month. But if out of that little more than $2,000 a month you earn, you would have to pay $1,200 a month, there is no way you can afford that insurance. So President Trump promised that healthcare would be more affordable—promise broken.

The President promised that under his plan, Americans would have better healthcare. Currently you are guaranteed essential benefits, including emergency services, rehabilitation services, maternity and newborn care, mental health and addiction treatment, hospital treatment, pediatric services—essential benefits. Those are the things you expect, in a healthcare system, to be covered.

But TrumpCare throws out the requirement to have essential care benefits. It means a State could choose to let insurers sell barebones plans that cover virtually nothing.

So you are making your payment and you think you have insurance, and then you get injured or you get sick and you find out it doesn't cover anything. That is not healthcare. That is predatory insurance policies, and that is what is allowed under TrumpCare.

So, Mr. President, you promised better healthcare and you delivered predatory policies—promise broken.

The President said he would make sure we kept the protections for preexisting conditions. He promised it. He repromised it. He triple promised it. He continued to promise it. But the amendment that he accepted for TrumpCare 2.0—passed 20 days ago by 217 Members of the House, in favor of government of, by, and for the powerful and the privileged—broke that promise and said States could allow the elimination of community pricing.

What that means is that you have preexisting conditions, but you can get the policy at the same price as everyone else. If you destroy community pricing, it means that when you file for your policy, the insurance company says: Well, let's see just what your problems are. Oh, we see you have asthma. We are going to charge you more. Oh, we see you have diabetes, we are going to charge you a lot more. We see you have delivered a child, which can create health problems. We are going to charge you more because you are a mother. We see that you had an episode of cancer. It is in remission—good news—but the odds of your getting it are higher than someone else; so we are going to charge you more.

That is because their goal is to make sure those people who have preexisting conditions are not in their insurance pool, because they will make more money. That is an assault on the premise that everyone will be able to have affordable healthcare because those folks are told: Because you have this condition or that condition, we are going to charge you more. The charges will be so high—and will be intended to be so high—that they will not be able to buy insurance. So they won't be covered.

That is part of the reason that the CBO has analyzed the fact that there will be 23 million more people without insurance come 2026 under TrumpCare than under current law. We can think of this as a tax. For those who actually can summon the funds, it is a set tax on sick people, and the sicker you are, the higher the tax bill you pay under TrumpCare.

So when the President promised not once or twice or thrice but multiple times to make sure that we keep the protection for people with preexisting conditions, that was a promise broken.

The President promised not to cut Medicaid. As I was waiting to speak last night, I was watching a local television channel, and they were playing tapes of one rally after another where

President Trump went out there and said: I am different; we will not touch Medicaid or Medicare or Social Security. He was emphatic. He was passionate. He was convincing.

He broke that promise under TrumpCare. It cuts $880 billion out of Medicaid. On top of that, the budget he released yesterday calls for $600 billion more on top of the $880 billion. If you cut $1.5 trillion from Medicaid, that is the promise broken. It is not broken by a little. When the President said he wouldn't touch Medicaid, he didn't proceed to break that promise in a tiny little way. No, he smashed it with a sledge hammer. He demolished it. He turned it into dust because he cuts $1.5 trillion out of Medicaid.

Medicaid doesn't just help provide healthcare to hard-working, struggling families. It pays for nearly half of all births in America. It provides coverage for one out of three children—healthcare for one out of three children in America. It pays for nursing home care for more than half of the American seniors who need nursing home care. Medicaid is the single largest payer for mental health and substance abuse disorders.

A lot of folks here have come down to this floor—from both parties—to talk about taking on the opioid epidemic, a substance abuse epidemic, a highly addictive drug doing great damage across America. Medicaid is the largest payer for substance abuse disorders in America, and TrumpCare cuts it by $1.5 trillion.

Two out of three school districts rely on Medicaid funds to provide services to children with disabilities.

So there we have it—one broken promise after another.

Now we turn to the Senate because it is time for this Chamber to respond. The only appropriate response is for us all to get together, dig a deep hole here on the floor of the Chamber, throw that House bill—TrumpCare 2.0—into it, light it on fire, drive a stake through it, and make sure it never sees the light of day. That is the only reaction that honors our ''we the people'' government. That is the only action that would honor the promises that President Trump made to the Nation while campaigning.

Now, a group of my colleagues are holding secret meetings far from the public to work out a new version of TrumpCare—TrumpCare 3.0. There is no bipartisan dialogue on this, and I am certainly not invited to listen in. So I can't tell you what they are coming up with, but I can tell you this: It is a process completely different than when we had a bipartisan, over a year-long process to debate and examine the question of the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare. The Finance Committee held 53 hearings. They spent 8 days marking up the bill. That was the committee's longest markup in over two decades. They considered 135 amendments. That was one of the two major committees that worked on ObamaCare. The other was the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, known as the HELP Committee. They held 47 hearings—not secret meetings in some room but public and bipartisan meetings with all committee members welcome and the press welcome, hearings, roundtables, and walkthroughs. Then, they had a month-long markup—a month long. I was there. I was on the committee. We had a square table—two sides with my Republican colleagues and two sides with my Democratic colleagues. During that markup, amendment after amendment was considered. Three hundred amendments were considered—bipartisan amendments, amendments from Democrats, amendments from Republicans—and 160 amendments were adopted from my Republican colleagues—160 amendments from across the aisle. That is the type of bipartisan work that was done.

Let's compare that to TrumpCare: no hearings in the House, no public display of the bill for a lengthy period for it to be publicly analyzed. There was virtually no chance for the public to see the actual text and weigh in. It passed under a process of rapid transit through the floor of the House, and then it came over here to the Senate.

Is the Finance Committee now holding hearings similar to what we did years ago on ObamaCare? We had 53 hearings. How many hearings has the Finance Committee had on TrumpCare 3.0? None, not one. The HELP Committee—the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee—held 47 hearings, roundtables, and walkthroughs. How many hearings has the HELP Committee had here in the Senate on TrumpCare 3.0? Not a single one.

Secrecy is the guiding principle of the day—secrecy that might produce another version of TrumpCare that will be devastating to millions and millions and millions of Americans. So, of course, they don't want the public to watch that process. Of course, they don't want to have weeks of hearings and markups that enable people to have hundreds of bipartisan amendments. If you are trying to push through something to destroy healthcare in America, you want to do it as secretly as possible. That is what is happening in the Senate at this very moment.

That is not the kind of process you should have in a democratic republic. That is the kind of process you have when you are about to do something diabolical and destructive that will hurt we the people.

ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act, isn't perfect. We could work together to make it much better. We could say no to all of the strategies that the Trump administration is doing right now to undermine the success of the marketplace.

Remember, the marketplace was the Republican idea. That was the Republican plan: Have a marketplace where private healthcare insurance companies could compete. That is what came from across the aisle. But now the Trump administration is doing everything it can to undermine that particular strategy. They are hesitating about whether to provide the cost-savings funds that allow the companies to provide lower premiums and lower deductibles. That hesitation means the insurance companies can't price out their policies for next year. So they either have to exit the exchange or they have to raise the price of their policies a lot higher.

The Trump administration is deliberately sabotaging the marketplace.

Then there is the fact that the whole point of the markets was to make it simple for an insurance company to go from one State to another State, to reach all of the customers at the same time of year—all making decisions—and you can reach out and talk to them. You can sell your policy easily. But the point is, a new company coming into the marketplace is concerned they will get a disproportionate share of those who are very ill, so there is an adjustment that takes place to say: No. You can come into this marketplace, and we will guarantee that you will get an adjustment if your patients end up being sicker than the average patients.

That is intended to make multiple insurers come in and compete with each other. But my Republican colleagues destroyed that provision. It is called risk corridors. They destroyed that provision. They are destroying the ability of companies to competently, responsibly come into the insurance marketplace and participate in the exchanges.

So not only do we have the diabolical TrumpCare 2.0 and the secret 13 proceeding to develop TrumpCare 3.0, we also have the administration destroying the ObamaCare exchanges, the marketplaces, which were the Republican idea brought into that bill.

I will do all I can to make sure we don't throw out healthcare for 23 million Americans. I hope every single Senator here, having come to this body and I know holding dearly this Constitution, will fight for ''we the people'' and not ''we the powerful and privileged'' and will fight against a bill that not only hurts healthcare for those 23 million people but also destroys healthcare institutions for everybody else because it undermines the financing of both the clinics and the hospitals.

In our own States, we are all hearing our Lauras and our Pauls and our Carols and our grandmothers talking about their 12-year-old grandsons. We are hearing them all say: Just say no. Do your job. Make our healthcare system work better. Live up to your commitment to ''we the people,'' a democratic republic, to fight for a nation of, by, and for the people.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. MERKLEY. I withhold my request.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:17 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 10:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate May 24, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN J. SULLIVAN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ON THE RETIREMENT OF BRIAN C. COOPER FROM THE HOUSE PARLIAMENTARIAN'S OFFICE

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as both the Dean of the House and as a former employer of Brian Cooper to congratulate him on his impending retirement from the House of Representatives after 35 years of service, and to thank him for his years of dedicated service to the House.

Brian is a Baltimore native and the youngest of seven children of his parents Dolores and Ellsworth Cooper, Brian loves the Charm City so much that he has lived in the same house his whole life.

He is a proud graduate of Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore (the very same high school attended by Supreme Court Justice and civil rights icon Thurgood Marshall), After high school Brian received a scholarship to the Community College of Baltimore, now known as Baltimore City Community College, where he received his degree in commercial and graphic arts.

Brian's first Capitol Hill job began in the fall of 1982 when he began work in the stock room for Publications and Distribution Services. Thereafter, in the 1980s and early 1990s, Brian worked for the House Post Office, the House document room, the Small Business Committee and the Government Operations Committee. At Government Operations, Brian served under both Jack Brooks and myself as Chair (the latter from 1991 through 1994). In that capacity Brian worked as staff assistant, handled filing and archiving of committee materials, and prepared documents for committee hearings and markups. I can personally testify that Brian's work was respected and appreciated by Members on both sides of the aisle.

In 1995, Brian joined the Office of the House Parliamentarian as Clerk where he spent a full 22 years, rising to become Chief Clerk to the Parliamentarian in 2009. Brian's most visible duties included assisting presiding officers during sessions of the House and handling timekeeping and legislative paperwork at the rostrum, In addition, Brian provided invaluable assistance in creating the first office computer network, supervising House pages, and preparing for joint meetings and joint sessions, It is no understatement to say that Brian observed and participated in a great swath of American political history during that time period.

Brian remains active in many artistic endeavors—including watercolor, oils, photography, and architectural design—which I understand he plans to continue in his retirement. Brian also plans to use his well-deserved retirement to travel to Italy and spend more time with family (including his many nieces and nephews).

As a devoted Baltimore sports fan, Brian has enjoyed the highs and suffered the lows of the local teams. He is a particularly avid fan of the Baltimore Orioles, and I am sure he appreciates the good start they are off to this year.

I know from personal experience and observation that Brian is the consummate professional. Members and staff on both sides of the aisle know Brian to be committed to an orderly and accurate legislative process observed in a fair, nonpartisan manner. In this age of increasing polarization and legislative gridlock, Brian is a committed institutionalist. He is the rare individual consistently striving to continue the customs and traditions of the House, and committed to pass on his institutional knowledge to his successors.

The House and the Congress will greatly miss Brian's services, but we will greatly benefit from his work and legacy.

MEMORIAL DAY 2017

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the brave men and women who gave their lives in the defense of freedom and to preserve the liberties that we hold dear in this nation.

Every Memorial Day, our nation unites to remember our military heroes who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to defend the values and freedoms we all cherish. This day of remembrance represents why so many people in our country are grateful to be Americans. No other nation has sacrificed so much to secure not only its freedom, but that of other nations.

As we reflect on the remarkable lives of our nation's fallen soldiers and their families, we must continue to honor them each and every day, as a single day of commemoration is far short of what they deserve. I know that back home in my district, our community will do their part in carrying on the legacy of these selfless individuals.

The Granbury community will host their sixth annual "Field of Flags," which is a memorial of over a thousand flags flying along Highway 377 and is dedicated to the lives of those that were killed in action or that are still missing in action. As we attend Memorial Day events like the "Field of Flags" this weekend, it is imperative to teach younger generations about the sacrifices these people made in order for us to live by the values that founded this nation.

May God bless our men and women serving today and in days past, may He comfort those who endure the pain of loss, and may He never cease to shed his grace on Texas and this great nation.

ALEXANDER ESCALANTE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alexander Escalante for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Alexander Escalante is a student at Pomona High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alexander Escalante is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alexander Escalante for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BACKPACK BUDDIES FOUNDATION OF LOUDOUN

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun, a local organization that aims to ensure that all children and students not only receive food during the week at school but also on weekends. Recently, this organization donated $41,000 to 18 groups across Loudoun County that support backpack buddy programs, including churches, schools, PTAs, and food pantries.

My constituent, Mr. Daniel Hampton, founded the Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun in 2014, and at the time the organization served two schools and approximately 275 kids. This school year, still under his leadership, 82 schools and over 3,600 students participated in backpack buddies programs. While this is an excellent testament to the organization's growth, it also speaks to the amount of students that often go without food on weekends, and I am thankful that organizations, like Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun, exist to help combat this issue.

Each year, the organization raises money for Backpack Buddy programs across Northern Virginia, yet this year marked a new fundraising record. The $41,000 raised allowed for the organization to disperse funds to 18 grant recipients in amounts ranging from $500 to $15,000, helping students all across Loudoun County. Most of the funds were raised at their

annual Friendsgiving Dinner. However, they also host several other fundraisers and events throughout the year in their effort to support this important cause. While the organization is thrilled with this year's fundraising initiatives and grant program, they hope that next year they will be able to help even more children in Northern Virginia. The organization's leadership in ensuring that every student of Loudoun County is properly fed and taken care of is truly exemplary, and I appreciate their ambition in support of our most needy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me and countless others in thanking Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun for their continuous efforts to aid our students who are in need. I am extremely grateful for the impact this organization has had on Virginia's 10th District and the entire Commonwealth of Virginia, and I look forward to speaking of its continued success in the future.

HONORING MELVIN MATTHEWS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Reverend Melvin Matthews.

Reverend Melvin Matthews was formally installed on May 22, 2016 at Bell Grove Missionary Baptist Church, making him the first new pastor since 1951 when his uncle, Reverend David Matthews, accepted the leadership role.

The elder David Matthews, a well-known spiritual and civic leader in Indianola, served the historic church for 65 years prior to his death on April 15, 2015, at 95.

The younger Matthews said, ''I pray that God will use me to continue the great legacy of excellence started by Pastor Matthews 65 years ago.''

Matthews grew up in Indianola and in Bell Grove Church, graduated from Gentry High School and Mississippi Valley State University before enlisting and becoming a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. After retiring from the service, he settled in Warner Robbins, GA, where he served as assistant pastor of the New Jerusalem Baptist Church, and youth minister, associate minister, education minister and economic development minister at the Fellowship Bible Baptist Church.

Since his return to Indianola in 2009, Mr. Matthews has served as assistant to the pastor, David Matthews, teaching the church's Thursday night Bible study.

Matthews has received his Bachelor of Theology degree and is scheduled to graduate from Abundant Blessings Theological Seminary on June 11 with his master's degree in theology.

Matthews's church, Bell Grove was organized as a ''brush arbor'' in 1868 in a location described as: ''Just across the railroad, on the corner, facing Indian Bayou across the street from the site of the old Mississippi Power and Light office.'' Down through the years, the church has experienced numerous strides and setbacks, including: being burned down twice, three other locations prior to the present spot on B.B. King Road, and the drowning of its first pastor on record, Rev. James Wright who was made pastor in 1878.

Since then, several moves included: comprising location on donated land ''on the hill'' on Adair Street and from there to its location on Chandler Street, where the church experienced major improvements under the leadership of Rev. E.G. Mason and elder Matthews.

Reverend David Matthews led the congregation from the corner of Hannah and Chandler to their present location on B.B. King Road in March 2006, where he continued to lead and inspire until his death. The younger Matthews stated, ''With God's help, Bell Grove will be a Bible believing, Bible teaching and Bible preaching church with a great commitment to the 'Great Commandment and Great Commission,' knowing that God will use this to build a 'Great Church.'''

During the 13-month interim since Rev. David Matthews' passing, the Rev. E.T. Goodman of Greenwood, a retired former pastor of Mt. Beulah Baptist Church in Indianola, conducted the morning worship services and Bible study.

Reverend Melvin Matthews is the son of Missouri Gray Matthews and the late Rev. John Matthews and is married to the former Cynthia Williams Matthews of Goulds, FL.

He often reminds people never say what you won't do because God has a way of changing your plans. He always said there were three things he would never do: preach, teach and return to Mississippi. God fixed it so he had to do all three.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend Melvin Matthews for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

ALEXANDER FERNANDEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alexander Fernandez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Alexander Fernandez is a student at Arvada K–8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alexander Fernandez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alexander Fernandez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

AIKEN CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. TREY GOWDY

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following Proclamation in honor of Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, for their 100th Anniversary:

Whereas, Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church was formed in 1915 by a group of fourteen men and women who purchased land from Mrs. Ida Aiken to build a church; and

Whereas, the church was named for Mrs. Aiken and became Aiken Chapel Church, pastored by the late Reverend R. L. Goodwin, a founding member; and

Whereas, Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church continues to be a leading church in Taylors, South Carolina, and under the leadership of Dr. W. O. Harrison Sr., pastor for more than thirty years, the congregation continues to be active and enthusiastic members of our community; and

Whereas, Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year and this anniversary celebration will draw members from the Upstate community to participate in this momentous milestone in the history of their church; Now therefore, be it

Resolved that I, TREY GOWDY, do congratulate the members of Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in recognition of their 100th Anniversary and thank them for their unwavering commitment, dedication, and contributions to Greenville County and to the Fourth Congressional District of South Carolina.

HONORING BLUEINK TECHNOLOGIES

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a dynamic and promising New Mexico company, BlueInk Technologies.

Just over two years ago, Faze Sharif and Zach Lovelady founded BlueInk with the aim to modernize the authenticity of eSignatures. Before computers, documents had to be signed in blue ink to signify authenticity. However, things are not so simple anymore. Sharif and Lovelady understood that the way we execute documents needed to evolve to keep up with the fast-paced business world in which fraud, misunderstanding, and mistakes cost businesses and consumers billions each year. BlueInk's innovative software ensures that documents are reviewed and executed in a fully customizable and transparent manner.

BlueInk's document review system can be configured to give signatories either a quick overview or detailed step-by-step review of a document's terms in any language and on any device. This guarantees that documents are reviewed according to a signatory's preferences in a manner most convenient to that individual. Additionally, BlueInk provides powerful fraud prevention and security measures that create a detailed audit trail of every event throughout the review and signing and uses cutting edge technologies to verify a signer's identity. These technologies include GPS and IP based geo-location, photo identification, SMS text codes and driver's license scans—all of which are memorialized after execution in a stand-alone document called the BlueInk Certificate of Evidence. The Certificate of Evidence creates almost irrefutable proof of execution to prevent contract disputes before they

begin. This technology has helped a wide range of industries including real estate, multi-family housing; professional services; automotive; business-to-business; human resources, local, state and federal entities; and financial or lending institutions.

BlueInk is currently being used by companies and consumers across the United States and this fast growing, innovative company has offices in New Mexico and Arizona. On May 3, 2017, their technology was approved by the U.S. Patent Office. I applaud the ingenuity, tenacity and forward thinking of the founders and their staff members, and I look forward to seeing how this next generation eSignature software will change the face of business.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI MARINE U.S. MARINE LANCE CORPORAL (LCPL) MARC LUCAS TUCKER

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to rise today in memory of U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal (LCpl) Marc Lucas Tucker who was killed on June 8, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. LCpl Tucker died in a non-hostile vehicle accident on Alternate Supply Route Uranium, Iraq.

LCpl Tucker, a Pontotoc native and 1999 South Pontotoc High School graduate, was assigned to the 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Force Service Support Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan, attached to 2nd Force Service Support Group (FSSG), II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward).

LCpl Tucker's mother, Donna Bagwell, says her son wanted to be a Marine from the time he was a little boy. He wanted to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather who also served in the Marine Corps.

In 2003, LCpl Tucker enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. His service included training in Okinawa and South Korea in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

In 2005, LCpl Tucker volunteered to go to Iraq to protect our nation in Operation Iraqi Freedom. His death was hard on the family, but Mrs. Bagwell says her son wanted to serve our nation.

''He loved America,'' Mrs. Bagwell said. ''He loved the Marine Corps and everything about it.''

LCpl Tucker's awards include the Combat Action Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and Sea Service Ribbon.

LCpl Tucker is survived by his parents; Kelly Tucker and Donna Bagwell and siblings; Christy Irby, Pam Bolen, and Terry Bagwell.

LCpl Tucker lived to serve our country and died while protecting it. His devotion to protecting our freedoms will not be forgotten.

IN RECOGNITION OF DAVID SHTULMAN FOR HIS WORK AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER ANN ARBOR

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Shtulman for his work with the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. As the Federation's Executive Director for the past nine years, Mr. Shtulman has helped the organization grow and develop to meet the needs of the Ann Arbor community.

Founded in 1987, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor serves as a forum to initiate and coordinate activities that foster Jewish communal life while promoting social justice. The organization hosts a variety of events throughout the community, including public forums discussing local and national events, as well as dinners and community gathering events. Additionally, the Federation administers the Jewish Community Foundation, a fund that provides assistance to local groups that further the organization's mission. Since 2008, Mr. Shtulman has served as the organization's Executive Director and has played a crucial role in the Federation's success during his tenure.

Throughout his time as Executive Director, Mr. Shtulman has provided important guidance for the staff and members of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. Under his leadership, the size of the Jewish Community Foundation has grown substantially, allowing the organization to fund Hillel programs in the community in addition to family services and supports. As a result, the Federation was able to allocate over $1.5 million to local, state and national organizations in the year 2015. Mr. Shtulman has also championed youth exchange initiatives as well as Hillel programs at the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. His principled leadership and passion for helping the Jewish community have helped it grow stronger, and he will be missed as he retires as Executive Director next month.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring David Shtulman for his outstanding work as Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. Mr. Shtulman has provided important aid to the Jewish community through his leadership and efforts.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY CHURCH

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Media, Pennsylvania as it celebrates its 150th Anniversary on September 8, 2018.

In 1868, Father Henry Wright became the first pastor of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church. As Media grew, the parish school opened its doors in 1912 and soon served many families.

In the last 25 years, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church has continued to grow and adopted the motto: The Helping Hands of Christ. The growth and development of the church's many ministries are a testament to this motto. Its many services include the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which provides shelter to the poor of Media, feeding the poor at the St. Francis Soup Kitchen monthly, collecting clothes for St. John's hospice, making rosaries for those imprisoned, knitting baby caps for premature births, and traveling on mission trips to St. Croix to aid a sister parish.

While the number of parishioners has grown immensely in the last one hundred and fifty years, the church's facilities and staff have kept pace. Most recently, the parish center has been refurbished and they have also added a youth Minister to their staff to develop ongoing spiritual endeavors for the children of the parish.

Mr. Speaker, we are grateful to the work of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, its parishioners, and Father Ed Bell, and I hope the church will continue to grow and thrive.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today regarding missed votes due to family matters. Had I been present for Roll Call vote number 271, Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 348, Providing for consideration of H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017, I would have voted Yea. Had I been present for Roll Call vote number 272, H. Res. 348, The Rule providing for consideration of the bill H.R. 953—Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017, I would have voted Yea. Had I been present for Roll Call vote number 273, H.R. 2288, The Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, I would have voted Yea.

CONGRATULATING TALIAFERRO COUNTY FAMILY CONNECTION

HON. JODY B. HICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Taliaferro County Family Connection, a nonprofit organization that advocates for children and families in northeast Georgia. Under the leadership of Executive Director Jackie Butts, Taliaferro Family Connection, in collaboration with its community partners, has achieved remarkable results.

For example, they developed and implemented a plan to tackle teen pregnancy, which had previously been on the rise. Now the rate is 42 percent lower. When they strategized to reduce truancy, within three years, the number of students absent from school more than ten days declined by 23 percent. And as a result

of its welfare-to-work initiatives, traditional welfare rolls declined by more than 95 percent. But that's not all. More babies are being born healthy, more children are receiving immunizations, and fewer families are living in poverty.

These achievements are a result of the partnership of several organizations working together with families to address their community's needs. One such partner is the Taliaferro County Board of Commissioners and, in particular, Mrs. Jane Hubert. Commissioner Hubert has been faithful throughout the years, attending the monthly collaborative meetings and supporting its special events, including the bike rodeo, back to school bash, street dance, and more. According to Mrs. Butts, over the past 19 years, the Board of Commissioners ''has supported every aspect of everything'' Family Connection has ever done. ''Everything I've needed they've come through with all these years,'' she said.

For these reasons and on the occasion of its 19th Anniversary, it is my honor to acknowledge Taliaferro County Family Connection and the partners that contribute to its success. Furthermore, I extend my personal appreciation to the families who join hand-in-hand with this worthy organization to ensure that their children succeed in school and beyond.

HONORING OLEALIA BRADSHAW

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable unsung hero, Mrs. Olealia Bradshaw of Mississippi.

Olealia Bradshaw was born to the late Spencer and the late Earnestine Frye on September 25th 1948. She is a graduate of John F. Kennedy Memorial High School in Mound Bayou, MS and later attended Coahoma Community College, where she obtained an Associate Degree in Social Studies.

Realizing the study of history was not her passion, she furthered her studies at Delta State University receiving a Bachelor Degree in Home. While at Delta State University, she met and later married standout football player, Jimmy Lee Bradshaw. To that union, four children were born: Gabriel, Michellda, Rasheda, and Ernestine.

Upon graduating from Delta State University, Olealia began teaching at John F. Kennedy High School and she remained a teacher for twenty-nine years. Throughout the years, students, co-workers and community residents have expressed how she blessed their lives, personally and professionally. Although her influence in the realm of education is immeasurable, Olealia considers her greatest achievement to be her total surrender to the Will of God Almighty, and her desire to live a life that is pleasing to Him. She is a faithful member of St. Mark Church of God in Christ where she serves as the Sunday School Superintendent.

She lives her life in servitude to others. She and her late husband would open their home for the homeless and provided various services to the homeless to be able to re-establish their independence.

Mrs. Bradshaw is a mentor to many children, not only when she was in the educational system, but in her neighborhood and Christian community. She is someone who is admired, loved and respected for how she speaks the truth of the matters at hand.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Olealia Bradshaw for being an unsung hero to others in the Mississippi Delta.

COMMEMORATING MARYLAND'S FALLEN HEROES

HON. ANDY HARRIS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of one of our nation's most important holidays, Memorial Day. On Monday, May 29, we will honor the brave men and women who have given their lives to this great nation. Over the course of our nation's history, countless Marylanders have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedom here at home and to liberate others from tyranny abroad. Since the War on Terror began in 2002, more than 135 Marylanders have died fighting for what they believe in.

Amidst the festivities and parades we will all enjoy on Monday, let us not lose sight of the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform, or the sacrifices made by the families they leave behind. These heroes and their families deserve our utmost respect, support, and gratitude. May God bless these fallen heroes and their families, and may God bless the United States of America.

BRET ELZEY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Bret Elzey for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Bret Elzey is a student at Goal Academy and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Bret Elzey is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Bret Elzey for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

TREVOR KINGSLEY GRAHAM

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Trevor Graham as a member of the United States Naval Academy Class of 2017.

Trevor will graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and he will receive a commission as an Ensign in the United States Navy on May 26, 2017.

His career in the service has just begun, but it is a testament to Trevor's unselfish devotion to the people of this great nation.

The challenges will be many and the time, although it may seem like an eternity, will fly by almost unnoticed.

South Mississippi is proud of Trevor and his accomplishments. We look forward to him continuing to represent not only Mississippi, but the entire nation, as a United States Navy officer.

As Trevor embarks on a new chapter in life, it is my hope that he may always recall with a deep sense of pride and accomplishment graduating from a program as prestigious as the Naval Academy.

I would like to send Trevor my best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors, thank him for his service, and congratulate him on this momentous occasion.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHIEF TIM GREEN FOR HIS 35 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CARMEL POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Tim Green of the Carmel Police Department. For over three decades, Chief Green has displayed courage, resilience, and leadership in serving the city of Carmel and its residents. During his tenure, Carmel was deemed the safest city to raise a child and best place to live in America, according to multiple national studies. The people of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District are forever grateful for Chief Green' s commitment to making the City of Carmel and the wider community of Hamilton County a safer, better place to live.

After graduating from North Central High School, Chief Green earned a Bachelor's Degree in Law Enforcement from Calumet College. He then went on to graduate from the FBI National Academy in Quantico Virginia, the FBI Enforcement Executive Development Seminar, and the Indiana Association of Chiefs of Police Executive Leadership Academy. Chief Green has served the Carmel Police Department for 35 years. He was first hired as a patrolman at age twenty-two. He has served as Commander of the Special Investigations Division, Director of the Hamilton County Drug Task Force, and was Assistant Chief of Police for 16 years. In 2011, Mayor Jim Brainard appointed Chief Green to lead the Department as Carmel's Chief of Police, where he has served with distinction for the last six years.

Chief Green's commitment to quality police work and professionalism on the force has ensured the safety of our citizens, and has made Carmel a great place to live and do business. His colleagues have described him as a strong leader and great mentor. Chief Green's

ability to lead by example inspires excellence in his fellow officers. His leadership has empowered the department to be successful in assessing and combatting trends in crime. During his time as Police Chief, Carmel's population has greatly increased and the department has grown to 113 sworn officers and 25 civilian support personnel and continues to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies, an international recognition for professionalism, excellence and competence.

Chief Green's devotion to a career of service to his community is invaluable. On behalf of all Hoosiers, I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to Chief Green for his 35 years of service. I wish the very best to Chief Green, his wife Brigit, and his two children, Jessica and Evan, in his well-deserved retirement and in the next exciting chapter of his life.

RECOGNIZING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIQUE RATIFICATION OF THE 27TH AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, this month, May of 2017, marks the 25th Anniversary of the unusual ratification of the 27th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Proposed to the state legislatures for ratification by the very First Congress in 1789, and sponsored by none other than James Madison, who was a Member of this House that year, it was finally incorporated into the Federal Constitution more than 202 years later when the Alabama Legislature became the 38th to approve it on this date in 1992.

Early in our nation's history, this constitutional amendment was adopted, pursuant to the Constitution's Article V, by the legislatures of Maryland and North Carolina in 1789, by those in South Carolina and Delaware in 1790, by those in Vermont and Virginia in 1791, as well as by that of Kentucky in 1792. But the proposal still had not gained the approval of enough states to be fully ratified. More than 80 years after Kentucky, Ohio lawmakers belatedly ratified it in 1873; but by then, with so many additional states having joined the Union, the ratification threshold had risen much higher. In order to become part of the U.S. Constitution today, with 50 states currently in the Union, a proposed constitutional amendment requires adoption by at least 38 states.

During its later years, as the amendment approached full ratification, I was privileged to personally contribute to this proposal formally becoming part of the U.S. Constitution. Before starting my congressional service in 2005, I was among those members of the Texas House of Representatives who voted "aye" on House Joint Resolution No. 6, on May 25, 1989, during the Regular Session of the 71st Texas Legislature, by which Texas lawmakers approved the amendment.

A common sense proposal, the amendment reads quite simply: "No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened."

In other words, Members may set congressional salaries for the next term of office, but may not adjust their own wages during their current term.

It is safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that the 27th Amendment would never have made its way into the Federal Constitution were it not for the dogged persistence of an employee in the Texas House of Representatives by the name of Gregory Watson. Back in March 1982, Mr. Watson was a 19-year-old student at the University of Texas at Austin. At the same time, he had just recently been hired to work part-time for a Texas state representative at the nearby state Capitol building.

As instructed, Watson wrote a paper for a course entitled "American Government" at the University. He ended up choosing as the topic for that paper a still-pending proposed constitutional amendment that Congress had offered to the state legislatures for ratification some 192 years earlier. Intrigued, Watson argued in his paper that despite the proposed constitutional amendment having lingered before the nation's state legislators since the year 1789, it was still needed as a means of holding Congress accountable for its actions relative to Members' salary and he pointed out, in the paper, that the proposal had no deadline by which America's state lawmakers must have taken action. Hence, despite its age, the proposed amendment was still technically pending business before our country's state legislatures.

Watson turned in the academic paper and was disappointed to get it back later with a grade of "C" on it. He also received a "C" in the course overall. That stood for some 35 years until March 2017 when the overall course grade was officially raised to an "A" by UT-Austin upon formal petition of Watson's former professor.

Undaunted at the time by the original low grade on his term paper, Watson began in the spring of 1982 reaching out to seek sponsorship of the proposed constitutional amendment in the various state capitols across the United States. He was intent upon this amendment ultimately finding its way formally into the U.S. Constitution. The following year, 1983, the Maine Legislature became Watson's first success story. After that, in 1984, Colorado's lawmakers gave their approval. And from that point forward—with Watson vigorously pushing every step of the way—its momentum quickened until the proposal officially became the 27th Amendment to the Federal Constitution on May 5, 1992, a decade after Watson first learned of it.

From 1982 to present, Mr. Watson has been an institution in the halls of the Texas State Capitol in Austin, having been employed in both the Texas House of Representatives and Texas Senate, during his decades-long career as state legislative staff. Working for a number of my then-colleagues, it was there that I first came to know Mr. Watson.

To commemorate the quarter century of the 27th Amendment's presence within the U.S. Constitution, and at the same time to congratulate Mr. Watson on the March 2017 raising of his overall course grade from "C" to "A", I include in the RECORD an article from the March 14, 2017, edition of the Austin American-Statesman.

Mr. Speaker, as we in the Congress debate various proposals to amend the Federal Constitution, it is important that we keep in mind the lessons that the 27th Amendment's unconventional path to ratification teach us about the power of the American people's wishes to ultimately prevail in our deliberations.

HERMAN: 35 YEARS LATER, A+ FOR AUSTINITE WHO GOT CONSTITUTION AMENDED?

(By Ken Herman—American-Statesman Staff)

Looks like we're heading for a happier new ending on a happy old story that some of you might not know about. Gregory Watson seems headed for an upgrade.

We begin back in spring 1982 when Watson, then a University of Texas student, signed up for Sharon Waite's GOV 310 course on American Government. For his term paper, young Watson researched the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, a hot topic of the day.

But Watson diverted when he came upon a book that listed other proposed constitutional amendments proposed but never ratified by the required three-fourths of the states.

"And this one instantly jumped out at me," he recalled.

"This one" was proposed in 1789 and concerned congressional pay raises. At the time Watson believed six states had ratified it, with the most recent being Virginia in 1791. (This turned out to be wrong; two others later did.)

Another key year here is 1917. Before that, Congress did not put expiration dates on proposed constitutional amendments. That meant the 1789 one was still in play, and this gave birth to a term paper Watson recalls he titled, "Can a proposed constitutional amendment to the U.S. Constitution offered by Congress in 1789 still be ratified by the state legislatures after all these years?"

OK, not a title that smoothly rolls off the tongue, but on point.

The amendment says any pay hike members of Congress OK for themselves can't take effect until after the subsequent U.S. House election. The topic was hot in the early 1980s because in 1981 Congress had, in Watson's words, "slipped itself a sneaky pay raise" by tucking it into a coal miner health care bill.

So Watson turned his paper in to the course teaching assistant, who gave it a C-. Watson, a persistent fellow, appealed to Waite.

"She said she'd take a look at it. So 1 gave it to her," Watson told me. "And then the next class period, she kind of physically tossed it back at me and said, 'No change.' "

He got a C in the course and says he was "kind of, sort of' angry at Waite and the T.A.

"So I said, 'I will not let this disappoint me. I will go out and get that thing ratified,' " Watson said.

He did, starting by contacting lawmakers in Maine in 1983. Watson's thing became the 27th (and most recent) amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1992.

And that was that. The U.S. Constitution had a new amendment. And Watson still had a C in GOV 310.

About a year ago, UT government professor Zach Elkins and KUT Managing Editor Matt Largey contacted Watson and expressed interest in his story, but Watson didn't know what they were up to.

He found out March 4, live and on stage at the Paramount Theatre, where he had been invited for what he thought was to be a Q&A about his involvement in amending the U.S. Constitution. His story was one of several told at something called Pop-Up Magazine, which is kind of a live newsmagazine. Several other topics came up before Largey's telling of Watson's story, who then was invited on stage.

''It was at that point that professor Elkins handed me the envelope,'' Watson said.

The envelope contained an Update of Student Academic Record form requesting that his 1982 grade in the government course be changed from C to A+. It was signed by Waite.

In the space for ''Explanation of error, delay or special circumstances,'' Waite wrote, ''In light of the student's heroic efforts to prove the professor and T.A. wrong in their assessment of his term paper, Mr. Watson deserves an A+.''

(FYI, UT doesn't do plus or minus grades so, if the form is approved, Watson's grade in the course will become an A.)

Waite, who was a lecturer at UT from 1981 to 1983, now works on a Mission citrus farm that's been in her family since 1922. Thanks to Watson's achievement, she proudly calls herself ''a footnote to a footnote of history.''

But she says C was the proper course grade at the time because she thought his theory about getting the constitutional amendment ratified was far-fetched. ''I thought it couldn't be done,'' she said. ''So he just proceeded to prove me wrong.''

''Hey, a lowly lecturer has had more effect on the Constitution than anybody in the professorial ranks,'' Waite said with a laugh.

Elkins said he teaches about Watson's effort as an inspiring example of ''heroic citizenship.''

''We just need the dean's signature, and it's done,'' Elkins said of the grade change effort.

If this gets rejected, nobody should ever wear burnt orange again.

Largey remains understandably fascinated by Watson's story, which he has told at Pop-Up Magazine events in San Francisco; Washington; New York; Portland, Ore.; and Seattle.

''He is one of a kind,'' he said of Watson.

Largey's KUT story about Watson is scheduled to air at 6:45 and 8:45 a.m. Tuesday. You also should be able to find it at KUT.org.

Happier ending upcoming, indeed. And you might have a chance to make it even happier. Watson, 54, long has struggled financially as he worked in the government world, where jobs come and go.

Watson never graduated from college. He's been pretty much a constant presence at the Texas Capitol since 1982, where he's worked for 15 different lawmakers. He moved to Austin City Hall in 2015 to work for then-Council Member Don Zimmerman. When Zimmerman was defeated last year, Watson was out of work. He's now an aide to Rep. Stephanie Klick, R-Fort Worth.

In addition to the government jobs, Watson has moonlighted in retail and has bused tables at a downtown restaurant. His current legislative job ends when the legislative session ends in May. He needs a job after that. Maybe you know of something.

I can tell you Watson knows his way around government and got the U.S. Constitution amended.

And, assuming the change gets OK'd, he got an A in GOV 310.

One more thing: Yes, Watson still has his 1982 term paper—somewhere.

''I have tried and tried and tried to find that thing,'' he said. ''I don't know where I put it. It's not the type of thing I would have thrown in the garbage. So it's somewhere. And I'm one of these funny people that keeps everything, so I've got storage unit after storage unit. It's somewhere in a box in a storage unit.

''Hopefully, the termites haven't gotten to it.''

They wouldn't dare.

HONORING SANTA CRUZ CHIEF OF POLICE KEVIN VOGEL

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Santa Cruz Chief of Police Kevin Vogel for his 30 years of service to the Santa Cruz Police Department, and the community it serves.

Chief Vogel has dedicated his entire career to the people of Santa Cruz, and was first sworn in as a cadet for the SCPD in June 1987. Throughout his long and distinguished career, Chief Vogel has served in numerous capacities in the Department, including as a patrol officer, traffic officer and detective. He was promoted to sergeant in January 1995 where he served as a patrol supervisor, downtown supervisor and detective sergeant. He was promoted to lieutenant in 2002, and to Deputy Chief of Police in May 2004. He was appointed as the City's 21st Chief of Police on December 9, 2010.

A champion of creative and transparent community-oriented policing, Chief Vogel oversaw the implementation of a highly successful and innovative predictive policing program. This program utilizes technology based on earthquake prediction technology, and was praised by numerous media outlets and law enforcement agencies around the country, including The New York Times, ABC World News, and was even named as one of Time Magazine's ''50 Best New Inventions'' of 2011. More important than the accolades however, was the significant reduction in crime rates experienced under the program. Under Chief Vogel's leadership, Santa Cruz policing became a model for the nation.

Chief Vogel also shouldered the impossible task of guiding the SCPD through its greatest hardship that occurred on February 26, 2013 when two officers, Sgt. Loran ''Butch'' Baker and Detective Elizabeth Butler, were tragically gunned down in the line of duty. This devastating crime shook our community to its core as we all mourned the loss of these fallen heroes. Through this time of uncertainty, Chief Vogel acted with honor and poise. He memorialized his fallen officers beautifully, and guided a deeply aggrieved department and community through this very difficult time. As time has passed, Chief Vogel ensured that the memories of Sgt. Baker and Detective Butler will not fade, and challenges his officers every day to honor their legacy and ultimate sacrifice by continuing to selflessly perform the work of upholding public safety in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who has dedicated their career to public service, it is my pleasure to add my name to the chorus of thanks and congratulations to someone who embodies that ideal of service to others. I whole-heartedly congratulate Chief Kevin Vogel on his retirement, and wish him all the best. There is no doubt that his commitment to justice, security, and prosperity for his community of Santa Cruz will serve as an enduring legacy.

DANIEL ARREDONDO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Daniel Arredondo for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Daniel Arredondo is a student at Wayne Carle Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Daniel Arredondo is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Daniel Arredondo for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING JAMES EDWIN GASPER ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. NEAL P. DUNN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of James Edwin Gasper, who today celebrates 90 years on this earth.

James, or ''Jimmy'' as his friends know him, moved to Washington County, Florida in 1932 with his mother, father and brothers and, with the exception of his time serving our nation during World War II, has lived there ever since.

In 1945, Mr. Gasper enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was assigned to 1223 Military Police Company in Bad Kissingen, Germany—ultimately completing his tour of duty in 1947 as a member of the newly-minted United States Air Force in Fürstenfeldbruck, Germany. Mr. Gasper's service earned him the WWII Victory and Army Occupation medals, and he was qualified as Marksman for both Pistol and Carbine.

After returning home from his time in the service, Mr. Gasper married the love of his life, the late Nellie Gasper, and raised a family that has grown from four children to include six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Mr. Gasper also went on to dedicate 40 years to the Florida Department of Transportation and served Washington County by setting up voting machines for all local elections.

Mr. Gasper is a lifelong member of the National Rifle Association of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW Military Order of the Cootie, Disabled American Veterans, the DAV National Order of the Trench Rats, and above all else, is a devout member of the Church of Christ.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring a great American of the Greatest Generation on his 90th birthday, James Edwin Gasper.

HONORING DR. L. FRANCES P. LIDDELL

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. L. Frances P. Liddell's dedicated commitment of service to her community and her services to the conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA) and the National Planning Committee.

Dr. L. Frances P. Liddell was awarded by the renaming of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), in her honor, to the Dr. L. Frances P. Liddell Student Policy Debate.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. L. Frances P. Liddell.

IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS FOR THE UNITED STATES

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a globally engaged and welcoming United States. Historically, hosting international students and scholars at our colleges and universities has been one of the most important ways America reinforces those values. We all need to recognize the vital contributions that international students, scholars and their families make when we welcome them to this great country.

Welcoming international students and scholars strengthens our diplomatic ties with countries across the globe and increases our national security.

International students and scholars who have spent time in the United States become informal ambassadors when they return home, sharing an appreciation for common values, counteracting stereotypes about the U.S., and enhancing respect for cultural differences.

Likewise, the ability to perform and compete globally is a vital component of a 21st century education. While less than 2 percent of U.S. students study abroad each year, having international students on our campuses can better prepare U.S. students to succeed as global citizens.

International students also contribute to the economic well-being of the United States. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators, international students and their families supported 400,000 jobs and contributed nearly $33 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2015 to 2016 academic year.

In my district, during the 2015 to 2016 academic year, 12,249 international students and their families contributed $359.7 million, supporting 5,967 jobs.

May is a critical month on the college calendar. It is the traditional end of the academic year, when graduation ceremonies take place across the country. But it is also a time when prospective students make their final choice on where they plan to study in the fall.

Actions taken by this administration, most significantly the Travel Ban Executive Order, have generated a great deal of uncertainty within U.S. colleges and universities. Many currently enrolled international students may choose not to travel home at the end of the academic year, for fear they might not be allowed to return in the fall.

Unsurprisingly, for prospective students, nearly 40 percent of higher education institutions reported application declines for the first time in many years.

Moreover, the anti-immigrant rhetoric and uncertainty created by our broken immigration system make the United States less attractive to the students and scholars who we want to contribute to our campuses and communities.

To ensure our nation's security, economic well-being, and academic leadership, we must remain an open and welcoming United States. So, to the international students and scholars who may be unsure about coming, I say: Your contributions are valued and you are welcome here.

SUPPORTING MONTENEGRO JOINING NATO

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleagues Ms. PINGREE of Maine and Mr. MOULTON of Massachusetts, in strong support of the small but strategically important country of Montenegro. This past weekend, Montenegro celebrated the eleventh anniversary of its independence. This week, President Trump will attend the NATO Summit in Brussels, where Montenegro will be officially welcomed as a new Member.

Along with the gentlewoman from Maine, I chair the Congressional Montenegro Caucus. The goal of the Caucus is simple: to educate Members of Congress on U.S.-Montenegro relations and show the people of Montenegro that they have friends here in the United States, including the U.S. Congress.

Over the last year, the relationship between the United States and Montenegro has received greater attention here on Capitol Hill. I rise today to ask my colleagues to continue to devote time and attention over the year ahead on this important alliance.

Indeed, in an overwhelming display of bipartisanship on March 28th the Senate ratified accession of Montenegro to become the 29th member of NATO. On April 11th, President Trump signed a Presidential Memoranda codifying this significant landmark.

I am proud to also share that on April 27th our counterparts—the elected representatives in the Montenegrin Parliament—voted 46–0 to ratify accession to NATO.

Eleven years ago this week, the people of Montenegro voted in favor of peacefully becoming an independent state and dissolving the union with Serbia. Shortly thereafter, all five members of the United Nations Security Council recognized the newest country in the world, beginning a new chapter in the history of trans-Atlantic relations regional and history.

The events of the last few weeks and the last 11 years demonstrate the truest form of representative democracy. Civil debate here on Capitol Hill and in Podgorica among elected leaders representing the will of our constituents has shown the world that democracy remains the best form of government, despite its imperfections. As Churchill said, "No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." [Churchill By Himself, 2013]

The inclusion of Montenegro into NATO will strengthen regional and trans-Atlantic security, and sends a strong message of the importance of democratic values. As my colleagues know, democratic values—transparency, equal justice and rule of law—must constantly be fostered. Accession into NATO has allowed Montenegro to advance toward these values. It is our responsibility as a Congress to help this new nation further embrace Euro-Atlantic integration and to increase its ability to fight organized crime and corruption.

Meanwhile, American business leaders likewise play a vital role. For example, the Stratex Group, the largest American investor in Montenegro with roots in Massachusetts, continues to work alongside our Embassy to foster stronger bilateral relations and a commitment by all Montenegrin elected officials—local and federal—to these democratic values we all hold dear. Only two places in Montenegro fly the American flag: the U.S. Embassy and the Stratex properties.

Beyond strengthening our formal diplomatic alliance, my colleagues here in Congress must endeavor to creatively promote stronger ties in at least two ways.

First, the State Partnership between the Maine National Guard and Montenegro has been successfully building relationships for over a decade, linking a unique component of the U.S. Department of Defense with the armed forces of Montenegro in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship. Through this program, the U.S. National Guard conducts military-to-military engagements in support of defense security goals but also leverages whole-of-society relationships and capabilities to facilitate broader interagency and corollary engagements spanning military, government, economic and social spheres.

Second, we must support business and cultural diplomacy—in Montenegro and around the world, encouraging our diplomats to have a greater appreciation for American investments in emerging democracies. To attract additional investment, Montenegro must fully commit to the rule of law, transparency and an independent judiciary. With the continued focus from the United States, I am confident Montenegrin government leaders will continue down the path of reform.

The Congressional Montenegro Caucus congratulates Montenegro on their achievements as they finally have a seat at the table at this week's NATO meeting, and stands in support of a stable, secure Europe based on collective self-defense, economic freedom, the rule of law, and democracy.

GRIFFIN CROSS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Griffin Cross

for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Griffin Cross is a student at Arvada West High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Griffin Cross is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Griffin Cross for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JORDAN VALLEY INNOVATION CENTER

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Jordan Valley Innovation Center on 10 years of dedication to new and innovative ideas.

The Jordan Valley Innovation Center is a place where students at Missouri State University and the private sector come together and work towards creating and researching the development of new technologies. As technology continues to change, it's important to have hands-on opportunities like the ones provided by the Jordan Valley Innovation Center.

Construction began for the center in 2005 and two years later, construction was completed. Since then the Jordan Valley Innovation Center has been a vital part of southwest Missouri and its success.

I am honored to recognize Jordan Valley Innovation Center on its 10-year anniversary. I look forward to watching this center grow as it continues to be a place of learning and creating. On behalf of Missouri's 7th Congressional District, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Jordan Valley Innovation Center on all its success.

GEORGE R. DUNLAP

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. George R. Dunlap, a U.S. Navy and Coast Guard veteran from Kansas City who served in both World War II and the Korean War. As one of four brothers to serve in active duty, George enlisted right after high school graduation on his eighteenth birthday in 1945. After his years of service, George moved to Kansas City where he devoted twenty-five years of his life to the Kansas City Police Department.

George's example of lifelong service to his country and community deserves our utmost appreciation. I am honored to share my gratitude and respect for this wonderful Missourian and applaud George for his dedication to serve and protect our country. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Dunlap and all those who serve our great nation.

INTRODUCTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE SENATE SHOULD GIVE ITS ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the sense of the House of Representatives that the Senate should give its advice and consent to the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

CEDAW is a landmark international agreement that calls on governments to take appropriate measures to end discrimination against women in all areas of life. The Convention seeks to develop women's equality in legal status, human rights, political participation, employment, education and healthcare, while committing countries to change or eradicate discriminatory laws, customs, and practices.

Despite 189 countries ratifying CEDAW, the United States is the only industrialized country in the world that has not ratified the treaty, even though its fundamental principles of equality and nondiscrimination are paramount to the ideals of our nation. Other nations that have not ratified CEDAW include Somalia and Iran.

CEDAW is not self-executing, but would be a powerful statement uniting the U.S. with most of the world in its commitment to women's rights and equality. Any legislation the United States might adopt to comply with the treaty would have to go through the normal Congressional process.

Ratification of CEDAW would continue our nation's proud bipartisan tradition of promoting and protecting human rights. Senate action in favor of ratification of CEDAW would strengthen our standing as a global leader for the rights of women and girls. I hope my colleagues will cosponsor this important resolution that will benefit women in the U.S. and around the world.

HONORING CYNTHIA LEON

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate A. Cynthia Leon on her reappointment as Chairman of the Texas Public Safety Commission.

On March 8, 2017, Governor Greg Abbott reappointed Cynthia to the Texas Public Safety Commission. Originally appointed in 2011 by then Governor Rick Perry, Cynthia served as the Commission's chairman from April 2012 to March 2017. Prior to serving on the Texas Public Safety Commission, Cynthia served as regional director for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Cynthia also served our country for 25 years in the U.S. Navy Reserves, retiring with the rank of captain.

Outside of her work on the Texas Public Safety Commission, Cynthia is an active member of her community. She is a member of the International Women's Forum and Leadership Texas, previously chairing the Dallas-Fort Worth and San Antonio Federal Executive Boards. Cynthia is also a life member of the Naval Reserve Association, Navy League, U.S. Naval Institute and the Reserve Officers Association.

Mr. Speaker, I again congratulate Cynthia on her well-deserved reappointment. I know that she will continue to lead the Texas Public Safety Commission in the right direction.

JOSIAH DOMINGUEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Josiah Dominguez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Josiah Dominguez is a student at Arvada K–8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Josiah Dominguez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Josiah Dominguez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING GROVER HOLMES HORTON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Mrs. Grover Holmes Horton.

Mrs. Horton, born June 15, 1938, left to be with the Lord on May 7, 2016. She was a great mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister and friend.

Mrs. Horton was a God-fearing member of Goodman Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Nathanial Christian. She was a very dedicated member who served in the choir and was the Secretary in her church.

Mrs. Horton was very active and became the founder of Goodman Male Chorus and a member of Tri-City Gospel Choir.

Mrs. Horton served with the John L. Webb Grand High Court, Prince Hall Affiliation—F&AM as the Most Ancient Matron of Goodman Court No. 91 in Goodman, MS; the 7th District Lecturer; and the 7th District past Most Ancient Matron.

Mrs. Horton enjoyed working as a home liaison for the Holmes County School District and was also a Certified Election Poll Worker for many years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the late Mrs. Grover Holmes Horton.

CHRISTOPHER TRAPANI

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Christopher Trapani as a member of the United States Merchant Marine Academy Class of 2017.

Christopher will graduate from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy on June 17, 2017, with a Bachelor of Science and he will be commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy Reserve.

His career in the service has just begun, but it is a testament to Christopher's unselfish devotion to the people of this great nation.

The challenges will be many and the time, although it may seem like an eternity, will fly by almost unnoticed.

South Mississippi is proud of Christopher and his accomplishments. We look forward to him continuing to represent not only Mississippi, but the entire nation, as a United States Navy Reserve officer.

As Christopher embarks on a new chapter in life, it is my hope that he may always recall with a deep sense of pride and accomplishment graduating from a program as prestigious as the Merchant Marine Academy.

I would like to send Christopher my best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors, thank him for his service, and congratulate him on this momentous occasion.

IN MEMORY OF THE LIFE OF DR. DORIS MITCHELL OLIVEIRA

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of Dr. Doris Mitchell Oliveira who passed away on May 10, 2017.

Dr. Oliveira was born February 9, 1934 to the late Dr. Joseph Mitchell, Sr., M.D, and Mrs. Vivian J. Mitchell. Her father was an obstetrician-gynecologist physician in Macon County, Alabama, and her mother was known for her work with the American Red Cross.

Dr. Oliveira graduated from Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine and was still working at the age of 83 when her health began to decline.

She was a member of the Alabama New South Coalition, Tuskegee Chapter of Links, Inc., the Republican Party of Macon County and a past member of the Board of Trustees at the University of West Alabama.

She is survived by her son Manuel Joseph Oliveira and brother, Dr. Joseph Mitchell, Jr.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the life of Dr. Oliveira. She will be greatly missed.

JUAN FLORES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Juan Flores for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Juan Flores is a student at Jefferson High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Juan Flores is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Juan Flores for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 268 (Probation Officer Protection Act of 2017), I inadvertently voted Yea. My intention was to vote Nay.

CONGRATULATING LEON J. ZIMMERMAN

HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is our honor to congratulate Leon J. Zimmerman of Trenton, New Jersey on his retirement after a 50 year career spanning governmental affairs, public relations, journalism, and communications.

Operating his own consulting firm for 44 years, Mr. Zimmerman was a highly regarded veteran of the New Jersey state lobbying corps. During his career, he represented several clients, including government agencies, businesses, private corporations, and trade associations. He also represented clients from industries like insurance, harness racing, and security alarms. One of these was the Professional Insurance Agents of New Jersey (PIANJ), which he represented for 43 years. PIANJ will be honoring Mr. Zimmerman at their convention in June 2017. Moreover, prior to starting his own public relations firm, Mr. Zimmerman was a national award-winning journalist for more than 12 years with the *Bergen Record*.

Throughout his career, Mr. Zimmerman held several positions and received numerous accolades. From his service to the insurance industry, he was recognized with the PIANJ Legislative Award in 1990 and received PIANJ's Distinguished Insurance Service Award in 1998—the first time this award was presented to an individual who was not an insurance industry official. During his work on harness racing, he served as President of the North American Harness Publicists Association, President and Chairman of the U.S. Harness Writers Association, and the founding President of the Association's New Jersey Chapter. He also received the Harness Horsemen International Media Award in 2006, North American Harness Publicists Golden Pen Award in 2000, and the U.S. Harness Writers Member of the Year Award in 1998 and 2011. In addition, for his work in the security alarm industry, Mr. Zimmerman was recognized with the NJ Burglar and Fire Alarm Association President's Award in 1992 and 2004, and he was honored with the National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association Executive Director of the Year Award in 1992.

Mr. Zimmerman was also involved in other professional and civic activities. For example, he served as President of the New Jersey Legislative Correspondents Club, and he was a speaker for courses and seminars in high schools and universities. In addition, Mr. Zimmerman was an advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He served on the Governor's Council on the Prevention of Developmental Disabilities, and he was a member of the Board of Trustees of Bancroft, a leading nonprofit, and of the Association for the Advancement of the Mentally Handicapped, Mercer County Chapter. He was also Executive Committee member and Chairman of Committees on Legislation and Advocacy for the New Jersey State Developmental Disabilities Council.

Mr. Speaker, we sincerely hope that our colleagues will join us in congratulating Mr. Zimmerman on his retirement after his illustrious career and thanking him for his service to the public and his community in New Jersey.

HONORING REVEREND MANNEY MURPHY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a multi-talented God-fearing man, Reverend Manney Murphy. Reverend Manney Murphy has been many things in his life: A star athlete at Vicksburg High School, executive with General Motors, business owner and for 3½ years the pastor of St. Mark Baptist Church, and chaplain for the Alcorn State University Braves football team during Jay Hopson's tenure as head coach. But his biggest role has been working with Central Mississippi Prevention Services helping young people make it to a better life through the program's summer camps and tutoring programs.

When he was a student at Ole Miss, he was asked to go to high schools and participate in special programs to speak to students. When he attended United Theological Seminary, he wrote two covenants: one for youth ministry and another for jail and prison ministry.

Murphy returned to Vicksburg in 2001 and began working with Central Mississippi Prevention director, Joe Johnson. Murphy has also served as director of the Vicksburg Housing Authority's community center, helping develop a jobs program, a GED program partnered with Hinds Community College and the Vicksburg Warren School District, and an after school tutorial program.

Murphy said at this point in his life he would like to return to the classroom to teach and work on a summer camp program called "Camp Wow," and find other ways to serve Vicksburg.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend Manney Murphy for his hard work, dedication and a strong desire to serve God and community.

HONORING THE GRADUATION OF ASHLEE VICTORIA PEREZ

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the graduation of Ashlee Victoria Perez from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, with the Class of 2017.

Marco Antonio Perez and Claudia Perez are very proud of their daughter, who graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Exercise and Sports Science. Ashlee averaged an exceptional Grade-Point-Average of 3.7 during her time at St. Mary's, all while maintaining active membership in the national sorority Sigma Sigma Sigma, becoming the captain of the cheer squad, and earning the Academic Madeline Scholarship. Her achievements are a testament to her work ethic and perseverance.

Mr. Speaker, I wish only the best for Ashlee in all her endeavors and know her future is filled with limitless possibilities.

MAKHMUD CHARIEV

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Makhmud Chariev for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Makhmud Chariev is a student at Standley Lake High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Makhmud Chariev is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Makhmud Chariev for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

TRUMPSCARE, OR THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, the federal budget is more than a financial document; it is an expression of our values and priorities as a nation.

Sadly, the President's budget fails this moral test of government.

This budget does not reflect our dreams for our nation; rather it is the "Nightmare on Pennsylvania Avenue."

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the President loves TrumpCare so much that he decided to double down and give us "TrumpScare" for a budget.

This TrumpScare budget stacks the deck for the rich while undermining hard-working Americans everywhere.

Throwing billions at defense while ransacking America's investments in jobs, education, clean energy and lifesaving medical research will leave our nation weakened.

America will not be made great by stealing another $610 billion from Medicaid, abandoning seniors and families in need, depriving students of realizing a dream to attend college without drowning in debt, or disinvesting in the working families to give unwanted tax breaks to wealthy corporations and the top 1 percent.

America will not be positioned to compete and win in the global, interconnected, and digital economy by slashing funding for scientific research, the arts and humanities, job retraining, and clean energy.

And the President's TrumpScare budget does not "put America First" by cutting Social Security Disability Insurance benefits and Meals on Wheels for Americans who depend upon these programs to sustain themselves.

Even a cursory review leaves the inescapable conclusion that this budget represents a betrayal—of our values as a nation, and of the promises made by the President during the election campaign.

Just like the "TrumpRussia" scandal, we have another mystery and the question is: "Whodunit?"

So the real question is whether the budgetary priorities in the budget represent a betrayal of the President, or a betrayal by the President of the promises he made repeatedly to the American people?

The answer to this question will tell us all we need to know about this budget and this President.

THEY'RE NOT COMING HOME

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this Memorial Day in honor and remembrance of all The Fallen who gave That Last Full Measure. I include in the RECORD this poem penned in their honor by Albert Carey Caswell.

THEY'RE NOT COMING HOME

(By Albert Carey Caswell)

They're not coming home
To their families where they belong,
who now must live so all alone
And to their Brothers In Arms,
who heard their last most heroic moans
No, they're not coming home
As up to Heaven they have flown
On the wings of an Angel which they now own
As Angels In The Army Lord to fight this new battle,
but not alone
They are not coming home
Could any of us such courage own?
And go off to war
And leave all that you so love and adore
For all the more
And for all their Brothers and Sisters to their left,
to their right endure
Oh the dreaded cost and horrors of war
Am sorry my dear child,
your Daddy or Mommy are not here no more
To hold you and tell you how much you they adore
To tuck you in at night
To assure you everything's all right
I know it's hard to hold the tears back you fight
Daddy, Mommy, oh how I wish you were here tonight!
As it gets harder to see their face with each year insight
But, they're not coming home
And as you awake in the middle of the night
Hush my child and don't you cry,
everything is going to be all right
Your parents are Angels now at the height
As they watch over you in the middle of the night
Both day and night,
as you will always be in their sights
Can't you feel their angel's breath envelop you,
and hold you so very tight
And one day up in Heaven together again you'll take flight
America, on this blessed day
Give thanks,
and give your most solemn praise
As you kneel and pray
For all those heroes who gave
That Last Full Measure,
who make up the home of the free and brave
On this Memorial Day
Give thanks to all of those who gave
As out to their loved ones call each and every day
And tell them how much their sacrifice means to us in every way
For the real heroes are the ones who fell,
who now lie in deep dark cold quiet graves I do tell
Who on Christmas mornings we no longer hear,
their laughter as they appear
Even the warm memories we take,
in our hearts still can't replace
Just to look into their face
Oh how your hearts break
Cause they're not coming home
But, in a box with the names they own
And some will never be found,
only our Lord God knows them now
No, they're not coming home
Sadly, for any Nation to grow and thrive
Our most precious and most courageous of all loved ones must die
Must lay down their lives
As it the price of freedom so very high
The price all of their loved ones so despise
Who must now live with tears in eyes

The magnificents who upon this Nation relies
Am so sorry but they're not coming home tonight
Amen

JACOB KEESE HOLLAND

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Jacob Holland as a member of the United States Air Force Academy Class of 2017.

Jacob will graduate from the U.S. Air Force Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Biology on May 24, 2017, and he will be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force.

His career in the service has just begun, but it is a testament to Jacob's unselfish devotion to the people of this great nation.

The challenges will be many and the time, although it may seem like an eternity, will fly by almost unnoticed.

South Mississippi is proud of Jacob and ills accomplishments. We look forward to him continuing to represent not only Mississippi, but the entire nation, as a United States Air Force officer.

As Jacob embarks on a new chapter in life, it is my hope that he may always recall with a deep sense of pride and accomplishment graduating from a program as prestigious as the Air Force Academy.

I would like to send Jacob my best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors, thank him for his service, and congratulate him on this momentous occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to have my votes recorded on the House floor on Monday, May 22, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of H.R. 1862 and H.R. 1842.

TOM CLARK

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tom Clark for his leadership, vision and lasting impact on Denver and Colorado as the CEO of the Metro Economic Development Corporation and Executive Vice President of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.

With more than 30 years of economic development experience at the state, regional, county and city level, Tom's unique perspective and wealth of knowledge is unparalleled. Tom's career spans four decades from Director of Commercial and Industrial Development for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, through positions with the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Denver Corporation, the Boulder Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson Economic Council, and the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.

Tom was the founder and first president of the Metro Denver Network, the Metro Denver region's first economic development program, for which he received the Arthur D. Little Award for Excellence in Economic Development. In 2012, Tom was recognized as the Denver Post's Business Person of the Year as well as awarded the Denver Business Journal's Power Book Award for Economic Development and Government. He has also been recognized as one of the nation's top economic development professionals by the Council on Urban Economic Development.

I extend my deepest appreciation for Tom and his dedication to our great state, and wish him the best of luck in retirement and future endeavors.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CLIFTON THOMAS WALKER

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to honor the life of Mr. Clifton Thomas Walker, who passed away on April 25, 2017, at the age of 95. Throughout his life, Mr. Walker was a respected leader in our community and an exemplary husband, father, and grandfather. His dedicated service, with the U.S. Marine Corps, Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, and Lovettsville Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department, helped keep the people of Virginia's Tenth District safe for over 50 years, and he will always be remembered.

Mr. Walker, originally from Bullock, North Carolina, joined the Marine Corps in December of 1941 just three days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. During his 20 years in the Marine Corps, he was stationed around the world, serving in Northern Ireland, Guam, Okinawa, Washington, DC, and Lebanon. Additionally, he was a decorated member of the Marine Corps Pistol Team, receiving bronze, silver, and gold medals, and he achieved the rank of Distinguished Pistol Shot in record time.

In May of 1959, Mr. Walker married his wife, Elaine, and they began building their home on South Berlin Pike in Lovettsville, Virginia, where they lived since Mr. Walker's retirement from the Marine Corps in 1961. Mr. Walker went on to work for DECO Electronics in Leesburg, the Painter Lumber Company in Lovettsville, and finally the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, where he served for thirteen years as the manager of the Department's Office of Property and Evidence.

During that time, Mr. Walker also served his community in various capacities. He was previously a member of the Lovettsville Town Council, the Lovettsville Planning Commission, and the Lovettsville Lions Club. He also volunteered for 35 years, starting in 1966, as a member of the Lovettsville Rescue Squad, which chartered as the Lovettsville District Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company, Inc. In recognition of his honorable service, he received the second Rescueman of the Year Award in 1971 and the Most Dedicated Member of the Year Award in 1980. Through his long and impressive career Mr. Walker became one of the most well respected members of the entire fire Company, and the memory of his dedication to service will always be present as a true inspiration to our local community.

Mr. Walker leaves behind a selfless legacy and career of service and will be greatly missed by the countless lives he has touched. He is survived by his wife, Elaine, and three daughters, Debbie, Linda and Carol, his grandson, Brandon, and many nieces and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the life of, and bidding farewell to, Clifton Thomas Walker. May he rest in peace, and his family be comforted.

RECOGNIZING THE 99TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC DAY OF AZERBAIJAN

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 99th anniversary of the Republic Day of Azerbaijan, and to extend my best wishes to all Azerbaijanis as they celebrate Republic Day. May 28th marks the founding of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, when the people ofAzerbaijan first gained their independence from the Russian Empire in 1918. Although Azerbaijan's independence was ended by Soviet forces in 1920, it is noteworthy that the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was the world's first secular parliamentary democratic republic in a predominantly Muslim nation—earning diplomatic recognition from the United States during the administration of President Woodrow Wilson. We also recall, with admiration, that the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan granted universal suffrage to its citizens in 1918, making it the first Muslim country to give women the right to vote.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan restored its independence on October 18, 1991, when its Parliament adopted the Constitution Act on the Restoration of the State of Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

For the people of Azerbaijan, these last two decades of independence have not been without challenges. At the top of the list would be the ongoing conflict with Armenia. Although a cease fire was signed in 1994 more than 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory—including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts—remains under Armenian occupation and more than 1 million Azerbaijanis remain refugees unable to return to their home villages. In 1993, the U.N. Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding complete, unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. I am happy that Azerbaijan is committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict with Anemia, and I support a swift and peaceful resolution to this conflict as well.

Azerbaijan is a key global security partner for the United States. As an active member of

NATO's Partnership for Peace program, Azerbaijan cooperates with the United States in countering terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and narcotics trafficking. Azerbaijani troops serve shoulder to shoulder with U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, as they previously did in Kosovo and Iraq. In support of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan has extended important over-flight clearances for U.S. and NATO flights as well as regularly providing landing and refueling operations at its airports for U.S. and NATO forces. Azerbaijan also plays an important role in the Northern Distribution Network, a supply route to Afghanistan, by making available its ground and Caspian naval transportation facilities.

Azerbaijan has emerged as a key player for enhancing global energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline are the main arteries delivering Caspian Sea energy resources to global markets, and completion of the Southern Gas Corridor—which will run from the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, and Albania into Italy—will increase the energy security of key American allies by increasing the amount of natural gas from the Caspian Sea to European markets.

Notably, Azerbaijan also provides roughly 40 percent of Israel's oil consumption. What may be more surprising to some is that Azerbaijan—a predominantly Muslim country—enjoys friendly ties with Israel beyond oil sales. Jews have resided in Azerbaijan for 2,500 years without persecution and today, the Jewish community in Azerbaijan numbers over 12,000. Azerbaijan is also home to Christian communities and has been praised for its religious tolerance by the European Parliament.

As co-chair of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, I congratulate the people of Azerbaijan on the monumental occasion of Republic Day in their national history. May the partnership between the United States and Azerbaijan progress and continue to benefit both of our nations.

AUNT BETTY'S 95TH

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Betty Helms, a World War II Navy Veteran who turns 95 today. Betty's life has been full of hard work and accomplishments as she was in the first group of enlisted women allowed in the U.S. Navy. Her tenacity to overcome adversity and eliminate barriers truly shows her character and life's work. Continuing with her lifelong theme of removing roadblocks to pursue her goals, she went on to earn an accounting degree from the University of Missouri in 1950. She later started her own consulting business and did not retire until age 85.

I am honored to share my gratitude and respect for this accomplished Missourian. Her dedication, determination and service are an inspiration to us all. I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking Betty for her years of service and wishing her the happiest of birthdays.

INTRODUCTION OF INDONESIAN FAMILY REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing legislation with my colleague, Rep. FRANK PALLONE, Jr., which would simply allow Christian Indonesian citizens who arrived in the United States between January 1, 1997 and November 30, 2002 fleeing religious persecution, the opportunity to reopen their claims for asylum within two years of the bill's enactment. The bill would only apply to individuals who were denied asylum solely for missing filing deadline which closes one year after arrival.

Beginning in 1997, when extreme violence and destruction of churches in Indonesia was at its height, many Indonesian Christians were driven from their homes. These individuals came to the United States, seeking refuge from persecution for their religious beliefs, but were either unable to file before the one-year deadline or were unaware any deadline existed. They deserve the opportunity to have their claims heard.

The United States has a long history of taking in refugees fleeing persecution and providing a process to fairly consider their claims. This bill does not automatically grant asylum, but merely removes a procedural barrier to their claims being considered. These individuals seeking asylum deserve a second chance to avoid the persecution they have fled and remain united with their families.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

HONORING SAMUEL KEITH TOLIVER, SR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Samuel Keith Toliver, Sr.

Mr. Toliver serves the Mound Bayou community as a consummate professional and champion of organizations that are committed to innovation, change, and providing solutions.

Mr. Toliver has successfully sustained a 30 plus year career as a school teacher and is a respected and well-known name amongst the Mound Bayou community. He founded and funded the Boy Scout Troop 302 to help young men develop the skills and knowledge that will help them meet the challenges of the twenty first century. Many of his troops have been recognized by the former President of the United States of America, William Clinton, for earning the highest ranking of Eagle Scout and have went on to achieve the highest rankings in the military. He is also a retired U.S. Army veteran; he served in the Vietnam War. After retirement he went on to serve as Commander of the American Legion; ensuring and helping veterans to receive severance by taking them to various centers and appointments for health issues. He also became a local farmer and a member of the Black Famers Association, which allows many of the local community to pick from his various harvests to feed their families.

He continuously uses various formats to serve and inspire others throughout his home state of Mississippi. This includes spearheading countless charity events, and encouraging others to demonstrate acts of service. Samuel K. Toliver, Sr. is a powerful voice in the community and will continue to blaze trails for the advancement of people of color in professional settings.

For the past 23 years, Mr. Toliver has been serving as a constable. He continues to serve his community in Mound Bayou, and at 71 years old, he shows no signs of slowing down.

Mr. Samuel Keith Toliver, Sr., and former wife Lois Gant Toliver, are the devoted parents of two sons: Samuel Keith, Jr and Steven, and two daughters: Kesha and Karmaletta.

Mr. Toliver is also a dedicated member of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Mound Bayou, MS, where he serves as a Pastor.

The past 50 years are saturated with the footprints of Toliver's positive influences in his service to his church, community, and family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Samuel Keith Toliver for his tireless service to his community of country.

WILLIAM CORONA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud William Corona for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

William Corona is a student at Arvada K–8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by William Corona is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to William Corona for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HELPING ENSURE THAT ALL VETERANS GET THE CARE THEY HAVE EARNED

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my strong support for the significant package of the veteran's bills that we considered in the House both yesterday and today.

As the former Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee (2001 through 2005), I am acutely aware of the challenges our veterans face, especially as they transition from military to civilian life. As Chairman, I authored more than a dozen laws to expand health, education, job training and homelessness benefits for the men and women who served in uniform. Thankfully these laws continue to help our veterans today.

Still, there are new problems and new issues that urgently need our attention. Massive wait times, forged documents by VA officials, ineptitude, lack of equipment and understaffing at VA medical facilities are just a few of the significant transgressions that have been exposed and are undermining the quality of service and the treatment our veterans receive.

In 2014 and 2016 Congress passed the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (P.L. 113–146) and the Faster Care for Veterans Act (P.L. 114–286), respectively, to usher in a complete overhaul of VA systems and to institute new technological services for scheduling and in order to secure more timely appointments. Some, but not nearly enough, progress has occurred. Much more must be done.

I commend Chairman PHIL ROE, MD and his team at the Veterans Affairs Committee on the package of bills before us this week. All seven will help improve the benefit programs and the delivery of healthcare service for our veterans.

For instance, The Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (H.R. 2288) will empower veterans who have been denied benefits to have more options as they pursue their appeals. Under the new bill, vets will be able to waive a hearing and submit additional evidence, pursue a hearing and submit additional evidence, or transfer the jurisdiction of their case to the Board of Veterans Appeals. The new options should help cut through some wait time.

The VA Scheduling Accountability Act (H.R. 467) would require an annual certification of compliance with scheduling directives. Additionally the bill blocks awards and bonuses to any leadership personnel at any medical center that fails to comply with the scheduling directives. Another bill before us, H.R. 1005 would allow the federal government to enter into agreements with state veteran's homes to pay for adult day health care for certain eligible veterans.

The No Hero Left Untreated Act (H.R. 1162) will create a one year pilot program at the VA to use innovative therapy to treat veterans who suffer from invisible wounds, which include post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury (TBI), military sexual trauma, chronic pain, or opiate addiction. As the author of the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act (P.L. 108–422) which authorized regional veteran polytrauma centers for multiple injuries including TBI, I fully support H.R. 1162 as a way to ensure that the VA is able to adapt to the newest and best practices for treating veterans with these unique traumas and conditions.

The Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017 (H.R. 1725) will require stronger reporting requirements from the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding the necessity for in-person disability examinations; and the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017 (H.R. 1329) will increase the cost-of-living-adjustment for disabled veterans who receive compensation to equal the same rate of increase for citizens who receive Social Security in 2018.

Finally, the VA Prescription Data Accountability Act (H.R. 1545) will help combat drug addiction among our veterans by creating better information and data sharing between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the states' recording programs.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind my colleagues that while this package of veterans bills marks another step forward, we cannot be lulled into thinking that the Department of Veterans Affairs and the delivery of veterans' benefits and healthcare will be forever fixed simply with the enactment of new legislation, no matter how well written.

Good legislation is the necessary, minimum first step. But equally important is the full and consistent implementation of the new laws, along with regular and aggressive oversight by this Congress. We must be vigilant and continue to push to ensure that all veterans get the care they have earned—at the time they need it—not months or years later.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 1

10:30 a.m.
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
To receive a briefing on countering corruption in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe region, focusing on returning ill-gotten assets and closing safe havens.
SD–G11

JUNE 6

10:30 a.m.
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
To hold hearings to examine Austria's chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, focusing on priorities and challenges.
SR–188

JUNE 7

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks
To hold hearings to examine working to improve the National Park Service workplace environment.
SD–366

JUNE 8

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SD–G50

JUNE 13

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Justice.
SD–192

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3103–S3157

Measures Introduced: Nineteen bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1210–1228, and S. Res. 176–178. **Pages S3145–46**

Measures Reported:

S. 190, to provide for consideration of the extension under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of nonapplication of No-Load Mode energy efficiency standards to certain security or life safety alarms or surveillance systems. (S. Rept. No. 115–76)

S. 215, to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska. (S. Rept. No. 115–77)

S. 226, to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination or ceiling fans using direct current motors from energy conservation standards for external power supplies. (S. Rept. No. 115–78)

S. 239, to amend the National Energy Conservation Policy Act to encourage the increased use of performance contracting in Federal facilities. (S. Rept. No. 115–79)

S. 723, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 115–80)

S. 724, to amend the Federal Power Act to modernize authorizations for necessary hydropower approvals. (S. Rept. No. 115–81)

S. 730, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of certain hydroelectric projects. (S. Rept. No. 115–82)

S. 734, to extend a project of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission involving the Cannonsville Dam, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 115–83)

S. 245, to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self Determination Act of 2005. (S. Rept. No. 115–84)

S. 343, to repeal certain obsolete laws relating to Indians. (S. Rept. No. 115–85)

S. 1094, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S3145**

Measures Passed:

Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse: Senate passed H.R. 375, to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the "Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse". **Page S3111**

Congratulating the Webster University Chess Team: Senate agreed to S. Res. 177, congratulating the Webster University chess team for winning a record-breaking fifth consecutive national title at the President's Cup collegiate chess championship in New York City. **Page S3150**

Authorizing Representation in United States v. Kevin Lee Olson: Senate agreed to S. Res. 178, to authorize testimony, document production, and representation in *United States v. Kevin Lee Olson.* **Pages S3150, S3151**

Securing our Agriculture and Food Act: Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1238, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S3151–52**

Sullivan (for Roberts/McCaskill) Amendment No. 217, to preserve the authority of the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services and make a technical correction. **Pages S3151–52**

Thapar Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit. **Pages S3124–29**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 52 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 136), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S3124**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding the provisions of Rule XXII, the vote on confirmation of the nomination occur at 1:30 p.m., on Thursday, May 25, 2017. **Page S3150**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination at approximately 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, May 25, 2017; and that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment and Leader remarks count postcloture on the nomination. **Page S3150**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 94 yeas to 6 nays (Vote No. EX. 135), John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State. **Pages S3106–11, S3111–24, S3157**

Messages from the House: **Pages S3138–39**

Measures Referred: **Page S3139**

Executive Communications: **Pages S3139–40**

Petitions and Memorials: **Pages S3140–45**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S3145**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3146–47**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3147–49**

Additional Statements: **Pages S3137–38**

Amendments Submitted: **Page S3149**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S3149**

Privileges of the Floor: **Pages S3149–50**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—136) **Page S3124**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:17 p.m., until 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3150)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Navy and Marine Corps, after receiving testimony from Sean J. Stackley, Acting Secretary of the Navy, Admiral John M. Richardson, USN, Chief of Naval Operations, and General Robert B. Neller, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps, all of the Department of Defense.

A 355 SHIP NAVY

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower concluded a hearing to examine industry perspectives on options and considerations for achieving a 355 ship Navy, after receiving testimony from Brian J. Cuccias, Huntington Ingalls Industries, and Ingalls Shipbuilding; John P. Casey, General Dynamics; and Matthew O. Paxton, Shipbuilders Council of America.

ATOMIC ENERGY DEFENSE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces concluded a hearing to examine Department of Energy atomic energy defense activities and programs, after receiving testimony from Frank G. Klotz, Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, Susan M. Cange, Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, and Admiral James F. Caldwell, Jr., USN, Deputy Administrator for Naval Reactors, National Nuclear Security Administration, all of the Department of Energy; and David C. Trimble, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office.

POOL SAFETY

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security concluded a hearing to examine pool safety, focusing on the tenth anniversary of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, after receiving testimony from Karen Cohn, The ZAC Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut; Richard Gottwald, The Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, Alexandria, Virginia; Connie Harvey, American Red Cross, Washington, D.C.; and Nancy Baker, Thomaston, Maine.

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy concluded a hearing to examine American leadership in the Asia-Pacific, focusing on economic issues, after receiving testimony from Tami Overby, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C.; and Robert C. Orr, University of Maryland School of Public Policy, College Park.

BORDER INSECURITY AND MS–13

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine border insecurity, focusing on the rise of MS–13 and

other transnational criminal organizations, after receiving testimony from Timothy D. Sini, Suffolk County Police Department, Yaphank, New York; Scott Michael Conley, Chelsea Police Department, Chelsea, Massachusetts; and J. Thomas Manger, Montgomery County Police Department, Gaithersburg, Maryland, on behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Vishal J. Amin, of Michigan, to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Executive Office of the President, Stephen Elliott Boyd, of Alabama, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, and Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to be Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCESS TO DATA STORED ACROSS BORDERS

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism concluded a hearing to examine law enforcement access to data stored across borders, focusing on facilitating cooperation and protecting rights, after receiving testimony from Brad Wiegmann, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice; Christopher W. Kelly, Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General, Boston; Paddy McGuinness, United Kingdom Deputy National Security Advisor, Oxford; Brad Smith, Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, Washington; and Jennifer Daskal, American University Washington College of Law, Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Althea Coetzee, of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported S. 1094, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

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: 33 public bills, H.R. 2617–2649; and 6 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 61–62; and H. Res. 353–356 were introduced. **Pages H4567–69**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H4570–71**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Hollingsworth to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H4507**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:29 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H4516**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Pastor Becky Tirabassi, Viewpoint Church, Newport Beach, CA. **Pages H4516–17**

Question of Privilege: Representative Sanchez rose to a question of the privileges of the House and submitted a resolution. The Chair ruled that the resolution did not present a question of the privileges of the House. Subsequently, Representative Sanchez appealed the ruling of the chair and Representative Buck moved to table the appeal. Agreed to the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair by a yea-and-nay vote of 225 yeas to 187 nays with one answering ''present'', Roll No. 274. **Pages H4523–25**

Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017 and Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act of 2017—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 352, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1761) to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, by a yea-and-nay vote of 239 yeas to 179 nays, Roll No. 276,

after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 231 yeas to 188 nays, Roll No. 275.

Pages H4520–23, H4525–27

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures. Consideration began Tuesday, May 23rd.

Protecting the Rights of Individuals Against Technological Exploitation Act: H.R. 2052, to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 277; and

Page H4527

Veterans Affairs Scheduling Accountability Act: H.R. 467, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, and to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 419 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 278. **Pages H4527–28**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Amending title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees: H.R. 1293, amended, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees; and **Pages H4528–33**

Social Security Fraud Prevention Act of 2017: H.R. 624, amended, to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on documents sent by mail by the Federal Government; **Pages H4533–35**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on Federal documents sent by mail, and for other purposes.''. **Page H4535**

Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 953, to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, by a recorded vote of 256 ayes to 165 noes, Roll No. 282.

Pages H4535–53

Rejected the McGovern motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 183 ayes to 230 noes, Roll No. 281.

Pages H4550–52

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–21 shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule. **Page H4545**

Rejected:

Esty amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 115–145) that sought to ensure that existing clean water protections apply to the release of these toxic chemicals into the environment (by a recorded vote of 191 ayes to 229 noes, Roll No. 279); and

Pages H4545–46, H4549

Huffman amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 115–145) that sought to protect commercial, recreational and subsistence fisheries from the negative impacts of unregulated discharge (by a recorded vote of 189 ayes to 230 noes, Roll No. 280).

Pages H4546–48, H4550

H. Res. 348, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 953) was agreed to yesterday, May 23rd.

Permitting official photographs of the House of Representatives to be taken while the House is in actual session on a date designated by the Speaker: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Res. 350, permitting official photographs of the House of Representatives to be taken while the House is in actual session on a date designated by the Speaker. **Page H4553**

Authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to S. Con. Res. 14, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I.

Page H4553

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, May 25. **Page H4554**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today and message received from the Senate appear on pages H5420 and H4528.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five yea-and-nay votes and four recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H4525, H4525–26, H4526–27, H4527, H4527–28, H4549. H4550, H4551–52, and H4552. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Department of Agriculture, Office of the Secretary. Testimony was heard from Sonny Perdue, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; Robert Johansson, Chief Economist, Department of Agriculture; and Michael Young, Budget Officer, Department of Agriculture.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held an oversight hearing on the National Guard and Reserve. Testimony was heard from General Joseph L. Lengyel, U.S. National Guard Bureau; Lieutenant General Charles D. Luckey, Chief, Army Reserve; Vice Admiral Luke M. McCollum, Chief, Navy Reserve; Lieutenant General Rex C. McMillam, Commander, Marine Corps Forces Reserve; and Lieutenant General Maryanne Miller, Chief, Air Force Reserve.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held an oversight hearing on the General Services Administration. Testimony was heard from Timothy O. Horne, Administrator, General Services Administration.

APPROPRIATIONS—CORPS OF ENGINEERS (CIVIL WORKS) AND THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Corps of Engineers (Civil Works) and the Bureau of Reclamation. Testimony was heard from Doug Lamont, Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works); Lieutenant General Todd Semonite, Commanding General, Chief of Engineers, Army Corp of Engineers; Scott J. Cameron, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, Department of the Interior; and Alan Mikkelsen, Acting Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Department of Education. Testimony was heard from Betsy DeVos, Secretary of Education.

APPROPRIATIONS—INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Indian Health Service. Testimony was heard from the following Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service officials: Chris Buchanan, Acting Director; Ann Church, Acting Director, Office of Finance and Accounting; and Michael Toedt, M.D., Acting Chief Medical Officer.

HIGH RISK AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PROGRAMS (EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE, ENERGY)

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held an oversight hearing entitled "High Risk American Indian and Alaska Native Programs (Education, Healthcare, Energy)". Testimony was heard from Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security Team, Government Accountability Office; Kathleen King, Director, Health Care Team, Government Accountability Office; and Frank Rusco, Director, Natural Resources and Environment Team, Government Accountability Office.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a budget hearing on the Department of Homeland Security. Testimony was heard from John F. Kelly, Secretary of Homeland Security.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY FY 2018 BUDGET REQUEST FOR SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a hearing entitled "Department of the Navy FY 2018 Budget Request for Seapower and Projection Forces". Testimony was heard from Vice Admiral William K. Lescher, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Integration of Capabilities and Resources, U.S. Navy; Allison F. Stiller, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research, Development, and Acquisition, U.S. Navy; and Lieutenant General Robert S. Walsh, Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration, U.S. Marine Corps.

GROUND FORCE MODERNIZATION BUDGET REQUEST

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a hearing entitled

''Ground Force Modernization Budget Request''. Lieutenant General John M. Murray, Deputy Chief of Staff, G–8; Lieutenant General Paul A. Ostrowski, Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology); Brigadier General Joe Shrader, Commanding General, Marine Corps Systems Command; and Lieutenant General Gary L. Thomas, Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources.

THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget''. Testimony was heard from Mick Mulvaney, Director, Office of Management and Budget.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hearing entitled ''Empowering Students and Families to Make Informed Decisions on Higher Education''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere held a markup on H. Res. 201, expressing support to the Government of Argentina for its investigation into the terrorist bombing of the Embassy of Israel in Buenos Aires on March 17, 1992; H. Res. 259, expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela; H. Res. 336, reaffirming a strong commitment to the United States—Mexico Partnership; and H.R. 1918, the ''Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act of 2017''. H. Res. 201, H. Res. 259, H.R. 1918, and H. Res. 336 were forwarded to the full committee, as amended.

NUCLEAR DEAL FALLOUT: THE GLOBAL THREAT OF IRAN

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade held a hearing entitled ''Nuclear Deal Fallout: The Global Threat of Iran''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT OF THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL'S OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Architect of the Capitol's Office of Inspector General''. Testimony was heard from Stephen T. Ayers, Architect of the Capitol; Christopher P. Failla, Inspector General, Architect of the Capitol; and Beryl H. Davis, Director of Financial Management and Assurance, Government Accountability Office.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee concluded a markup on H.R. 2431, the ''Michael Davis, Jr. and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act''; H.R. 2407, the ''U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Authorization Act''; and H.R. 2406, the ''U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Authorization Act''. Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2605, the ''Secret Service Reauthorization Act of 2017''. H.R. 2431, H.R. 2407, H.R. 2406, and H.R. 2605 were ordered reported, as amended.

EXAMINING IMPACTS OF FEDERAL NATURAL RESOURCES LAWS GONE ASTRAY

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Examining Impacts of Federal Natural Resources Laws Gone Astray''. Testimony was heard from Diane Dillon, County Supervisor, Napa County, California; Celeste Maloy, Deputy Attorney, Washington County, Utah; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on the ''Community Reclamation Partnerships Act''. Testimony was heard from John Stefanko, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Active and Abandoned Mine Operations, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; and public witnesses.

EXAMINING 'SUE AND SETTLE' AGREEMENTS: PART I

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy and the Environment; and Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs held a joint hearing entitled ''Examining 'Sue and Settle' Agreements: Part I''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXAMINING THE OVERHEAD COST OF RESEARCH

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Research and Technology; and Subcommittee on Oversight held a joint hearing entitled ''Examining the Overhead Cost of Research''. Testimony was heard from Dale Bell, Division Director, Institution and Award Support, National Science

Foundation; John Neumann, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2518, the ''Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2017''; H.R. 2548, the ''FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2017''; H.R. 2547, to support the Nation's veterans by expanding to all Veterans Administration medical professionals the ability to provide physical examinations on eligible veterans and issue the medical certificates required for the operation of a commercial motor vehicle if certain requirements are met; H.R. 1684, the ''Disaster Support for Communities and Homeowners Act''; H.R. 2258, the ''Active Duty Voluntary Acquisition of Necessary Credentials for Employment Act''; and H.R. 2593, the ''Federal Maritime Commission Authorization Act of 2017''. H.R. 2518, H.R. 2548, H.R. 2547, H.R. 1684, H.R. 2258, and H.R. 2593 were ordered reported, as amended.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2018''. Testimony was heard from David J. Shulkin M.D., Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.

VETERANS AFFAIRS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''VA Financial Management''. Testimony was heard from Laurie Park, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance, Office of Management, Department of Veterans Affairs; Beryl H. Davis, Director, Financial Management and Assurance, Government Accountability Office; Nick Dahl, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; and a public witness.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2372, ''Veterans Equal Treatment Ensures Relief and Access Now Act''; H.R. 2579, ''Broader Options for Americans Act''; and H.R. 2581, the ''Verify First Act''. H.R. 2372, H.R. 2579, and H.R. 2581 were ordered reported, as amended.

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposals with U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin''. Testimony was heard from Steven T. Mnuchin, Secretary, Department of the Treasury.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine the Farm Economy, focusing on perspectives on rural America, 10 a.m., SR–328A.

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Homeland Security, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Homeland Security, 10:30 a.m., SD–138.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on the Budget: to hold hearings to examine the President's fiscal year 2018 budget proposal, 9:45 a.m., SD–608.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Neil Chatterjee, of Kentucky, and Robert F. Powelson, of Pennsylvania, both to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and Dan R. Brouillette, of Texas, to be Deputy Secretary, all of the Department of Energy, 9:45 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Treasury, and tax reform, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: business meeting to consider S. 722, to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, S. 905, to require a report on, and to authorize technical assistance for, accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria, S. 1141, to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict, H.R. 601, to enhance the transparency and accelerate the impact of assistance provided under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to promote quality basic education in developing countries, to better enable such countries to achieve universal access to quality basic education and improved learning outcomes, to eliminate duplication and waste, S. Res. 114, expressing the sense of the Senate on humanitarian crises in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen, S. Res. 18, reaffirming the United States-Argentina partnership and recognizing Argentina's economic reforms, S. Res. 176, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, an original bill entitled, ''Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017'', the nomination of Scott P. Brown, of New Hampshire, to be Ambassador to New Zealand, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Independent State of Samoa, Department of State, and routine lists in the Foreign Service, 9:30 a.m., S–116, Capitol.

Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy, to hold hearings to examine the United Nations Human Rights Council, 2 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to hold hearings to examine stopping the shipment of synthetic opioids, focusing on oversight of United States strategy to combat illicit drugs, 9:30 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 782, to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, and the nominations of Noel J. Francisco, of the District of Columbia, to be Solicitor General of the United States, and Makan Delrahim, of California, and Steven Andrew Engel, of the District of Columbia, both to be an Assistant Attorney General, all of the Department of Justice, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 1 p.m., SH–219.

Full Committee, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 1:45 p.m., SH–219.

Full Committee, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Food and Drug Administration, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Department of Commerce, 10:30 a.m., H–309 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Forest Service, 9:30 a.m., 2007 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, hearing entitled ''Department of the Air Force FY 2018 Budget Request for Seapower and Projection Forces'', 8 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, hearing entitled ''Fiscal Year 2018 Priorities for Nuclear Forces and Atomic Energy Defense Activities'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H. Res. 351, condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya; H. Res. 354, condemning the violence against peaceful protesters outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence on May 16, 2017, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future; H. Res. 355, condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks in Manchester, United Kingdom, on May 22, 2017, expressing heartfelt condolences, and reaffirming unwavering support for the special relationship between our peoples and nations in the wake of these attacks; H.R. 2484, the ''Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017''; and S. 371, the ''Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, Improvements Act'', 9:30 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, hearing entitled ''Violence Outside the Turkish Ambassador's Residence: The Right to Peaceful Protest'', 12 p.m., 2200 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''Vietnam: Why Religious Freedom and Human Rights Are Critical to U.S. National Interest'', 12:30 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Government Operations; and Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs, joint hearing entitled ''Improper Payments in the Federal Government: Student Aid'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce; and Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations, joint hearing entitled ''All Work and No Pay: Change Orders Delayed for Small Construction Contractors'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10:30 a.m., Thursday, May 25

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at 1:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, May 25

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 1973—Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act. Consideration of H.R. 1761—Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act.

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