United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 10, 2017 No. 115

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 10, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL K. SIMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

Reverend Gary Studniewski, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we give You praise and thanksgiving for the United States of America, birthed on the American creed that You have endowed every person with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We know that true liberty nor happiness is possible without recourse to Your divine will.

Bless the Members of this governing assembly with the wisdom of discerning Your will concerning our national affairs and help them exercise their powers at the service of the rights of each citizen.

Bless this House and the country it serves with Your protection and peace, You who are source of peace, now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 2(a) of House Resolution 415, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

JULY 6, 2017.

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

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Pursuant to Section 431(a)(3) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (Pub. L. 115–31), I am pleased to appoint the following individuals to serve as Commissioners to the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission:

Ms. Nicola Miner of San Francisco, California

Ms. Jennifer Siebel Newsom of San Francisco, California

Thank you for your attention to these recommendations.

Sincerely,

NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 2(b) of House Resolution 415, the House stands adjourned until noon tomorrow for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

Thereupon (at 10 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, July 11, 2017, at noon for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1865. A letter from the Acting Administrator, Agriculture Marketing Service; Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Beef Promotion and Research; Reapportionment [Doc. No.: AMS-LPS-16-0071] received June 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1866. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Fiscal Year 2016 Operational Energy Annual Report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1867. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of Financial Management, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medicaid/CHIP Program; Medicaid Program and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); Changes to the Medicaid Eligibility Quality Control and Payment Error Rate Measurement Programs in Response to the Affordable Care Act [CMS-6068-F] (RIN: 0938-AS74) received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1868. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Titanium Dioxide; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0252; FRL-9961-82] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1869. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Pyroxsulam; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0066; FRL-9962-60] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1870. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental

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Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Oxirane, 2-methyl, polymer with oxirane, hydrogen sulfate, ammonium salt and potassium salt; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0780; FRL-9962-19] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1871. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Labeling Relief; Formaldehyde Emission Standards for Composite Wood Products [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2017-0243; FRL-9963-05] (RIN: 2070-AK30) received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1872. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Indaziflam; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0166; FRL-9962-61) received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1873. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Flubendiamide; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2007-0099; FRL-9962-13] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1874. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Difenoconazole; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0254; FRL-9962-05] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1875. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Compliance Date Extension; Formaldehyde Emission Standards for Composite Wood Products [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2017-0244; FRL-9963-74] (RIN: 2070-AK35) received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1876. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Buprofezin; Pesticide Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0595; FRL-9962-06] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1877. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval of California Air Plan Revisions, Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District [EPA-R09-OAR-2016-0415; FRL-9962-53-Region 9] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1878. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Site-specific Sulfur Dioxide Requirements for USG Interiors, LLC [EPA-R05-OAR-2017-0081; FRL-9964-49-Region 5] received June 30, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1879. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Lebanon that was declared in Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1880. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report to Congress on the status of the Government of Cuba's compliance with the United States-Cuba September 1994 ''Joint Communique'', the treatment by the Government of Cuba of persons returned to Cuba in accordance with the United States-Cuba May 1995 ''Joint Statement'', and the United States-Cuba January 2017 ''Joint Statement'', together known as the Migration Accords, pursuant to Public Law 105-277, Sec. 2245; (112 Stat. 2681-824); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1881. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting Transmittal No. 16-74, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1882. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting Transmittal No. 16-68, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1883. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting Transmittal No. 16-67, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1884. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting Transmittal No. 16-75, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1885. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 17-002, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1886. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 17-027, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1887. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 16-091, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1888. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 17-024, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1889. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 17-025, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1890. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-91, ''Primary Date Alteration Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1891. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-90, ''St. Mary's Way Designation Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1892. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-92, ''Medical Marijuana Cultivation Center Relocation Temporary Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1893. A letter from the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas, transmitting the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas 2016 management report and financial statements, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9106(a)(1); Public Law 97-258 (as amended by Public Law 101-576, Sec. 306(a)) (104 Stat. 2854); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1894. A letter from the Inspector General, U.S. House of Representatives, transmitting the results of an audit of the U.S. House of Representatives' annual financial statements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016; to the Committee on House Administration.

1895. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Regulatory and Legislative Affairs, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revival of Abandoned Applications, Reinstatement of Abandoned Applications and Cancelled or Expired Registrations, and Petitions to the Director [Docket No.: PTO-T-2010-0016] (RIN: 0651-AC41) received July 5, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1896. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule, technical amendment, withdrawal — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Moses Lake, WA; Olympia, WA [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0217; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ANM-8] received July 5, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1897. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, Small Business Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Rules of Procedure Governing Cases Before the Office of Hearings and Appeals (RIN: 3245-AG82) received June 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Small Business.

1898. A letter from the Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report titled ''Part D Plans Generally Include Drugs Commonly Used By Dual Eligibles: 2017'', pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395w-101 note; Public Law 111-148, Sec. 3313(a)(2); (124 Stat. 477); 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. POLIQUIN (for himself, Mr. BERGMAN, and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire):

H.R. 3169. A bill to improve the hiring, training, and efficiency of acquisition personnel and organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Appropriations, 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. CHABOT (for himself and Mr. EVANS):

H.R. 3170. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to require cyber certification for small business development center counselors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan (for himself and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 3171. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide that certain orthotist's and prosthetist's clinical notes under Medicare be treated as part of the patient's medical record; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BRADY of Texas (for himself and Ms. MATSUI):

H.R. 3172. A bill to amend the Medicare IVIG Access and Strengthening Medicare and Repaying Taxpayers Act of 2012 to extend the Medicare Patient IVIG Access Demonstration Project; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MARCHANT (for himself, Mr. KIND, and Mr. MEEHAN):

H.R. 3173. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to create alternative sanctions for technical noncompliance with the Stark rule under Medicare, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MOULTON (for himself, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. KILMER, and Mrs. LOVE):

H.R. 3174. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to enter into contracts with industry intermediaries for purposes of promoting the development of and access to apprenticeships in the technology sector, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

80. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution 8, encouraging the Federal Government to work with states to plan and implement state-tailored, innovative Medicaid programs that maximize states' flexibility and choice; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

81. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to House Joint Resolution 11, urging the President of the United States to direct the United States Department of State's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls to cease labeling gunsmiths as manufacturers; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

82. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to House Joint Resolution 4, requesting that Utah's congressional delegation submit federal legislation amending federal block grant maintenance-of-effort requirements; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

83. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to House Concurrent Resolution 7, expressing support for Utah ranchers grazing livestock on Utah's public lands; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

84. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to Senate Joint Resolution 11, urging that sufficient funding be budgeted to complete the Bonneville Unit of the Central Utah Project, as well as the entire Central Utah Project; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

85. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to Senate Joint Resolution 5, supporting the intended proposed Unites States House Bill to increase oil royalties to the Utah Navajo Trust Fund; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

86. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to House Concurrent Resolution 6, supporting the Re-Empowerment of the States Amendment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

87. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution 6, affirming the resolve of the state Legislature and the Governor to protect the civil liberties, religious freedoms, and dignity of all Americans, legal immigrants, and refugees seeking protection against persecution; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

88. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution 2, urging Congress to authorize states to regulate air ambulance billing and collections of patient care costs; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

89. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to Senate Joint Resolution 13, urging the United States Congress to authorize the creation of for profit corporations by the several states; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

90. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to Senate Joint Resolution 3, urging Congress to enact legislation permitting commercial drivers who are 18 to 21 years old to operate a commercial motor vehicle in a contiguous state; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

91. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Maine, relative to House Petition 1120, urging the United States Congress to reduce tariffs on lobster and seafood products to keep Maine and domestic lobster and seafood products competitive with Canadian lobster and seafood products; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

92. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Utah, relative to House Joint Resolution 17, urging the President of the United States and Congress to recognize state authority and take action to restore power to the states; jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary, Rules, the Budget, and Oversight and Government Reform.

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. POLIQUIN:

H.R. 3169.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. CHABOT:

H.R. 3170.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan:

H.R. 3171.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BRADY of Texas:

H.R. 3172.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H.R. 3173.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MOULTON:

H.R. 3174.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution of the United States

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 449: Mr. NORCROSS and Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 506: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 592: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. DONOVAN, and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 858: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. WALZ, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 916: Mr. DONOVAN.

H.R. 1002: Mr. DELANEY.

H.R. 1094: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 1552: Mrs. LOVE.

H.R. 1575: Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 1606: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 1673: Miss RICE of New York, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Ms. MENG.

H.R. 1692: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1698: Mr. PITTENGER, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. RICE of South Carolina.

H.R. 1802: Mr. VALADAO.

H.R. 1841: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1847: Mr. HOYER.

H.R. 1884: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Ms. ROSEN.

H.R. 1904: Mr. TONKO and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.

H.R. 2059: Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 2260: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 2519: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. COMER, Mr. BRAT, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MESSER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 2774: Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. KILMER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, and Mr. EVANS.

H.R. 2785: Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 2956: Mr. GAETZ.

H.R. 3027: Mr. HECK.

United States of America

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 10, 2017 No. 115

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, all power and authority belong to You. You even rule the raging of the sea.

Guide our lawmakers as they strive to serve Your purposes for their lives in this generation. May they acknowledge You as the source of their strength, finding their security in the wisdom and love of Your unfolding providence. Make our Senators a shining example of trustworthy and responsible stewardship. Use them to strengthen the moral fiber of our Nation and world. Lord, give them a renewed sense of reverence and wonder that You have chosen them to serve You and country.

We pray in Your gracious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, ObamaCare has been hurting toward collapse for years. Today it sits on the edge of a total meltdown. Unless we do something about that, even more Americans are going to get hurt.

These are the men and women we represent—Americans who didn't do anything wrong and Americans who, in too many cases, have been hurt by ObamaCare already—and we have a responsibility to help before ObamaCare literally comes crashing down around them.

I think each of us understands this. Yet, too often, this central fact seems to get lost amidst the din of cable news sound bites and over-the-top attacks. Too many seem to have forgotten the pain ObamaCare has brought to so many families over the years. Too many seem to have forgotten that even more will be hurt if the ObamaCare status quo is allowed to continue.

I recently shared a letter from a constituent in Lancaster who told me about her struggle to make ends meet under ObamaCare. Here is what she said: ''Why is there a law forcing me to pay for something I can't afford,'' she asked. ''Either I can eat and pay my mortgage or [I can] pay for insurance.''

I recently shared the story of a single mom from Berea, a full-time student trying to make ends meet. When she began searching for a plan on the ObamaCare exchanges, she told me she saw a startling picture: high premiums and a staggering deductible.

''At this rate,'' she wrote, ''I would honestly be better not to take health insurance at all and hope for the best. Americans like myself need something better.''

Premiums have been skyrocketing under ObamaCare for years now—by as much as an average of 105 percent in the majority of the States' Federal exchanges. Unless we act, premiums are poised to continue skyrocketing.

Customers are now learning what they can expect next year, and the situation is concerning. ObamaCare premiums could climb by as much as 30 percent in my State, over 40 percent in Tennessee, and over 50 percent in Georgia. Unfortunately, these States are not alone. This is a trend we are seeing all across our country.

To make matters worse, many have been left behind with fewer options as ObamaCare has forced insurance options literally out of the marketplace. Unless we act, choices will continue to decline on the exchanges, just as they have over the past several years.

I recently shared a Lexington native's account about the limited options she found on the exchanges. Here is what she said: ''I live in one of the three largest cities in our state, and I had two options for insurance this year. The lowest deductible option,'' she continued, ''was $10,000.''

I recently shared a Louisville mother's pleas for Congress to bring relief from ObamaCare's limited options. Here is what she said: ''Middle class Kentuckians are hurting because of ObamaCare,'' she said. ''Residents [have] little choice for health plans and our family is not the only one suffering from the high costs of health insurance.''

''I hope,'' she concluded, that ''you will push hard to fix our healthcare system.''

This year, families in 70 percent of counties had just one or two insurance options on ObamaCare. As a survey out just yesterday showed, the number of uninsured grew in 2017, with nearly 2 million people dropping ObamaCare coverage. Now we are hearing even more negative projections for next year.

In fact, it is expected that in 2018, thousands could be left without any ObamaCare options at all in States like Nevada and Missouri and Ohio, while thousands more are left with just one choice, which is really no choice at all.

A new CMS report released just a few minutes ago found that nearly 40 percent fewer insurers have filed to participate in the ObamaCare exchanges next year. This reduction in choice is a trend we have been seeing under ObamaCare, and it seems only to keep getting worse.

Higher prices, fewer options, diminished hope, that is the legacy of

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

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ObamaCare for too many. It has been failing the American people for years, and it will collapse around them if we fail to act.

We will not make things better if we go backward with even more Federal control. We will not solve this problem by simply throwing more money at it. Bandaids just will not work here. The American people deserve solutions that finally empower them in making more of their own decisions about their families' healthcare.

I regret that our Democratic colleagues have made clear they are not interested in working seriously with us to pursue the types of comprehensive reforms needed to improve healthcare for hard-working Americans who have been hurt by this law, but the Senate Republican conference will continue working to help these families because we believe they deserve better than ObamaCare and its years of failures.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as Senators continue to return from the State work period, we return here in the Senate to the topic of healthcare, which everyone in America should continue to focus on.

Even after weeks of work, it seems my friends on the other side are no closer to having enough votes to proceed to their bill—which, of course, they insisted on doing with no Democratic votes or input.

The biggest challenge proposed to the legislation during the break was an amendment offered by the junior Senator from Texas, TED CRUZ, which would remove crucial protections for sicker Americans and unbalance the marketplace. The Cruz amendment is a hoax. Under the guise of lowering premiums, the Cruz amendment would actually make healthcare more expensive because deductibles and copayments would be so onerous that many Americans would pay more, not less, in out-of-pocket expenses than they pay today. These lower premium policies will have such high deductibles and copays that the policies themselves would be virtually worthless. Imagine you have a $2,000 premium and a $1,000 deductible in your policy. Imagine now that, under the Cruz amendment, an insurance company is allowed to offer a cheaper policy because they aren't required to cover very many services. That policy might have a premium of $1,000 but a deductible of $10,000. You would be paying less monthly, but you would have to put down a huge amount of money for your policy to even kick in. In that way, a Cruz insurance policy is worse than no policy at all because the vast majority would pay a monthly premium and never hit their deductible, so they would be getting no health insurance benefit at all. You would pay the premium, but the deductible is so high, your insurance never kicks in. What good is that? In effect, for many, it is a policy that would have a premium but no insurance.

In addition, Americans with preexisting conditions will almost certainly be left without access to affordable and quality healthcare, making the Senate bill even meaner than the House bill on this issue. Even the Republican Senator from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, said that about the Cruz amendment. Here is what he said:

> There's a real feeling that [it's] subterfuge to get around pre-existing conditions. . . . If it has the effect of annihilating the pre-existing condition requirement that we have in the existing bill, then obviously I would object to that.

Those are the words of Senator GRASSLEY.

Members of both parties agree that the most significant potential change to the Republican TrumpCare bill is an amendment that would make the legislation even worse. So make no mistake about it—the Cruz amendment is a cruel, mean hoax.

Let's not forget that even without the Cruz amendment, the substance of the base Senate Republican bill is devastating. The CBO reports it would cause costs to go up, care to go down, and force 22 million Americans off their health insurance. It would end Medicaid as we know it.

This weekend, I had the good experience once again to go to the Utica Boilermaker, a famous 15K road race in my dad's hometown, the largest in the country. People from 45 States participated.

As usual, I walked through the crowd afterwards, congratulating people on a great race. They were sweaty, but they were happy. I came upon three men in wheelchairs. Here they are. Just after they crossed the finish line, the first thing they said to me was this: ''Senator, please protect Medicaid; we'd be lost without it.''

These were proud men, and they deserved to be proud for finishing a difficult race made harder by their disability. They could be forgiven for taking a moment to celebrate. Instead, they wheeled up to me to talk about how important Medicaid was to them.

These are not slackers. They wouldn't be in a race like this if they were. They needed some help. They are disabled. I don't know how their disabilities came about—probably from work. They look like really strong guys. Are we going to take away their Medicaid so we can give tax breaks to the wealthiest people in America? I hope not.

These folks know that Medicaid is a lifesaver for Americans with disabilities. They want it maintained and strengthened, not dismantled so our Republican friends can give another tax break to the very wealthy.

These three should remind everyone that dismantling Medicaid is the wrong way to go. It is time to move on from the failing Republicans-only approach and start over in a bipartisan way in healthcare.

Republican leadership has been trying to cajole their Members into voting for this bill by saying that if Republicans fail to pass this bill, they will have to work with Democrats. Republican leadership is not telling their Members: Vote for this bill because it is a good bill. No, they are saying: Vote for this bill or you will have to work with Democrats.

When you can't defend the substance of the bill at all, it is time to move on. When using bipartisanship as a threat is your only argument, it is time to move on.

My Republican friends should not be so afraid of working with Democrats that they are bullied into supporting a terrible bill. The Senate—we all know this—was intended as a forge for bipartisan consensus—a cooling saucer, as the Founding Fathers said. In the Senate, bipartisanship should be the first option, not the last resort.

I repeat: We Democrats are willing to work. We are ready to work with our Republican colleagues on healthcare. Today Democratic leadership sent a letter to my friend the majority leader again offering to work with him on specific legislation to stabilize the marketplaces and improve the quality and lower the cost of care.

The majority leader said over the break that he may be forced to work with Democrats to stabilize marketplaces. Democrats say: Let's do it. Let's do it now.

We sent the majority leader four specific proposals, led by Senator SHAHEEN's amendment to guarantee cost-sharing reduction payments—the most important thing we can do to stabilize the marketplace and even lower premiums for many right now. Whatever your views on healthcare, we should agree that we need to stabilize the marketplaces. I look forward to a response from the majority leader to our letter.

When will my Republican friends realize that their partisan approach to healthcare is a dead end, that the only way to truly improve our Nation's healthcare system is to finally heed Democrats' requests to come together and work in a bipartisan way? I hope our Republican colleagues realize this sooner, not later.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PUTIN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, there was the G–20 and President Trump's bilateral meeting with President Putin. While a few good things came out of this summit, overall, it was an embarrassment to our country and our ideals. Clearly, the lowest moment of all was President Trump's meeting with Vladimir Putin, on several counts.

As our intelligence community has concluded, the President of Russia deliberately interfered in our elections and sought to undermine our democracy. That is not Democrats making it up. That is 17 intelligence agencies—men and women, many of whom risk their lives for us every day, people we look up to, people we admire. They are the ones who said there was interference—not Democrats, not politicians. I wish President Trump would stop saying it was Democrats who came up with this idea. It was our own intelligence community. Rather than decisively confront the Russian President on these actions—the Russian interference—the President reportedly acquiesced to Putin's denial.

To give equal credence to the findings of 17 U.S. intelligence agencies and an assertion by Mr. Putin is disgraceful. They are not equal. Our 17 intelligence agencies are far more important to us and far more credible to us than Vladimir Putin. Every American—every American—no matter their party affiliation, should take umbrage with the President of the United States equating our own hardworking, dedicated intelligence community with Mr. Putin, who has shown contempt for our democracy and has spent his professional and political career trying to undermine it.

This almost certainly paves the way—the President's actions almost certainly pave the way—for future Russian interference on our elections. If Russia feels there will be no punishment for interfering in our elections, no reprimand at all from the United States, surely they will try and try again.

President Trump went so far as to float the absolutely absurd possibility of a joint cyber security unit with the Russians. Then he backtracked after he was hailing it as one of the great things about the summit. When he got such reaction—particularly, from Senators MCCAIN and RUBIO, from his own party—he backtracked.

The thought of working with our adversary on cyber security should send chills down the backs of all Americans. It is clear that President Trump is not willing to be the guardian of American interests when it comes to Vladimir Putin. The House of Representatives must step in and fill the void by passing the Senate's tough, bipartisan sanctions bill to finally punish Russia for their intrusions in our 2016 elections.

The Founding Fathers established Congress as a check and balance on the executive branch when necessary. The House must be that check and balance now.

Given the President's actions at the G–20, there is now even more reason for the House to pass the Senate sanctions bill, which passed 98 to 2—overwhelmingly bipartisan.

Given President Trump's casual dismissals of the findings of our intelligence community and face-value acceptance of Mr. Putin's word, there is even greater cause to tie the hands of this administration with a tough Russia sanctions bill.

Now more than ever, it is clear that President Trump should not have the final and only authority to lift sanctions on Russia. He has shown that he is willing to turn a blind eye to the direct assault on our democracy and did so this weekend in his meeting with Mr. Putin.

Congress should step up and say: President Trump, if you are not going to punish Russia for meddling with our democracy, we will.

The American people are wondering: How can the President of the United States fail to stick up for our democracy? How can the President fail to seriously challenge the man responsible for violating the sanctity of our elections?

Candidly, I am dismayed that the Republican leadership in this body and in the other has been so quiet in the wake of these events. The Republican Party's foreign policy for decades was predicated on opposition to the Soviet Union and now Russia. It was the linchpin of their foreign policy. Now, when a President of their party is soft on Russia—even after Russia blatantly interfered in our elections—we hardly hear a peep from the Republican leadership.

I certainly acknowledge, respect, and admire the words of my friends, Republican Senators MCCAIN, GRAHAM, SASSE, and RUBIO, who have spoken out and should be recognized and applauded for it. They have been the exception, not the rule. We need to hear more from the Republican leadership because this situation is getting ever more troubling.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, a word on the revelation that President Trump's son, his son-in-law, and his campaign manager met with a lawyer with ties to the Kremlin with the pretext of discussing information that would be damaging to Secretary Clinton's campaign.

This revelation should be the end of the idea pushed by the administration and the President that there is absolutely no evidence of an intent by the Trump campaign to coordinate or collude. It is certainly not proof positive—we don't know what was said in the meeting—but these reports in the press at least demand further investigation.

It defies credulity that the President's campaign manager, his son, and his son-in-law, at the height of a very, very heated campaign—three people very close to the President and at the helm of that campaign—were all going to a meeting with a Russian lawyer to discuss Russian adoption. Indeed, Donald Trump, Jr., has now admitted—after he first said the purpose of the meeting was adoption—that he agreed to meet to get potentially damaging information about Hillary Clinton.

The Senate Intelligence Committee has already indicated that it will look into the possibility of coordination or collusion as part of their broader investigation. This meeting and the background behind it should be included in future document requests and additional lines of inquiry.

After providing documents to the Intelligence Committee, Donald Trump, Jr., must also testify before the committee to explain why three of the highest level members of the Trump administration thought it was appropriate to meet with a Russian source to receive information about a political opponent. We are talking about the wellspring and pride of our democracy—free and fair elections without foreign interference.

When the President of the United States is unwilling to forcibly defend our democracy, a violation of our sovereignty, face to face with its chief adversary, when we continue to learn of additional meetings between his campaign and Russian sources, when we hear that the White House is actively working to water down or stall a bill of tough Russia sanctions, we in Congress need to step up and defend the vital interests of our country. Both parties should be united in that effort because, at least for now, the President seems unwilling to do so.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, on nominations, which were just mentioned in a noncamera briefing at the White House, I understand the White House is complaining about the pace of nominations, citing the obstruction of Senate Democrats. If the White House is looking for a cause of the delay, they only need to look in the mirror.

No administration in recent memory has been slower in sending nominees to the Senate. In the last few weeks, the administration has sent several nominees without all of their paperwork or their ethics agreements complete. We can't go forward until that happens.

The White House has sent nominees for the Cabinet on down without the paperwork or ethics agreements completed. That is almost unprecedented in its degree. Time and again, they have stalled on providing committees with the information they need to proceed on nominations.

After campaigning on ''draining the swamp,'' the Trump administration has

sent the Senate a slew of nominees with a myriad of conflicts of interest and ethics entanglements. It is our duty in the Senate to vet these nominees properly because the American people are entitled to ethical government. Yet the White House blames the delay on obstruction in the Senate.

It is typical of the Trump administration to do something wrong and blame someone else for their problem.

Mr. President, I yield the floor for my good friend and colleague from the great State of Florida.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, before the Senator, our leader, yields the floor, will he yield for a quick question?

Mr. SCHUMER. I would be happy to yield to my friend from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. The Senator told about the comments that have been made during the July 4th recess—comments about the healthcare bill—to various Senators.

Would the Senator believe that this Senator had innumerable people come up to him all over Florida, whatever venue that I was in—and I was in public venues quite a bit—and say: Please don't let them take away my healthcare.

Would the Senator further believe that, in visiting the State of an unnamed Republican Senator where that Senator and I ended up in an airport together in that Senator's State, lo and behold, this Senator observed innumerable constituents of that Republican Senator in the airport coming up and saying: Please don't take my healthcare away. Would the Senator believe that?

Mr. SCHUMER. In answer to my friend, I absolutely would because I have experienced the same thing. I was in my State in many areas that are Republican, many areas that Donald Trump carried. The same thing happened. I have not previously seen this depth of concern from people of all different backgrounds, all different economic levels, all different races, religions, creeds, colors saying the exact same thing. People are so afraid of this TrumpCare bill that they are begging us, almost, to please stop it. In answer to the Senator's question: No, I am not surprised because I have experienced the same thing in some of the most conservative, rural, Republican parts of my State during this break.

Mr. NELSON. I would say just quickly, and further, that this Senator gathered up a group of constituents who had written to our office. In this particular case it was the Tampa office, and three of them have been helped enormously by being on the Federal exchange, since the State of Florida has not adopted an exchange. One person who is on Medicaid said that they would not be alive had they not had the sanctity and the integrity of the existing Medicaid system, which covers some 70 million people in the country.

Would the Senator tell me, is it accurate that the Senate Republican bill would eviscerate Medicaid by taking some $800 million out of Medicaid over a decade?

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator is exactly correct. It affects people across the board, including these fine people whom I met at the Utica Boilermaker 15K race.

I thank my colleague for his, as always, astute questions.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Rao nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON pertaining to the introduction of S. 1521 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. NELSON. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I know we are all glad to be back in Washington, DC, at work after a few days back home, and I know many of us are eager to continue our work to rescue the American people from the failures of the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare.

The failures of ObamaCare are well documented, and while they don't necessarily apply to everyone, particular individuals and small businesses in the so-called individual market have seen a meltdown of the insurance exchanges. The Presiding Officer in her home State of Iowa, I know, has had insurance companies pulling out to the point where people can't even find an insurance carrier who will sell a policy that qualifies under the Affordable Care Act. That is because the Affordable Care Act was, unfortunately, a partisan exercise and a Big Government experiment that has failed.

All you have to do is look at the promises that were made at the time that ObamaCare was being sold back in 2009 and 2010. The President himself said that if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Well, that proved to be not true. He said that if you liked your policy, you can keep your policy. Well, that proved not to be true as well because people saw their policies canceled because they couldn't qualify under the new requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

Perhaps the thing that stung the most was the fact that the President said back in 2009 and 2010 that an average family of four would see a reduction in their health insurance premiums by an average of $2,500. Well, what we have seen since 2013 is a 105-percent increase in insurance premiums under the Affordable Care Act, and so instead of seeing a cut in their out-of-pocket costs of $2,500, what people have experienced—families of four—is an insurance premium increase of $3,000. Now, some people may be able to absorb that cost, but most people I know cannot. What it has meant is, they have had to reprioritize their spending so they have less to spend on other things in their life.

We do know, based on the promises made at the time the Affordable Care Act was being sold to the American people, that it has been a failed experiment. So the question is, What are we going to do about it? What are we going to tell the folks in Iowa who can't find an insurance policy or an insurance company who is willing to sell them an insurance policy on the individual market? What are we going to tell people in Texas who have seen their premiums go up by 105 percent since 2013 and have been priced out of the market or who found that the only policy they can afford is one with deductibles that are so high that basically they are denied the benefit of their insurance at all? What are we going to do about it?

A number of my colleagues have noted that even if Hillary Clinton were elected President of the United States, we would still have to be revisiting the failures of the Affordable Care Act because the failures are all too obvious and public and can't be denied, but despite that, and acknowledging many of ObamaCare's failings, many of our friends across the aisle—in fact, all of them so far in the Senate—have made clear they want nothing to do with providing any help or any aid to the people who are being hurt by the failures of ObamaCare. They don't want to lift a finger to help the people who can't find insurance, who can't afford it, and the policies they are forced to buy limit them in a way that they simply have decided to opt out.

So instead of working together with us—you would think they would do

that. It would just be a logical thing to do because their constituents are the ones who are being hurt, in many instances. Instead, they have fought us tooth and toenail to preserve the broken status quo in healthcare that has failed so many people across the country, and they have made dubious claims about our efforts to address the problem to the best of our ability.

It reminds me of the old saying: Don't let the facts get in the way of a good story. Our friends across the aisle have simply washed their hands of any responsibility, even though they are the ones who passed the Affordable Care Act and created this failed experiment and put so many people in distress. Now they are in the process of attacking those of us who are trying to help people who are hurting, rather than lending a helping hand and working together with us in a bipartisan way.

Let me talk just a minute about Medicaid because this is one of the big attacks that is being made by our Democratic colleagues on our efforts to try to salvage healthcare for people who are hurt by the failures of the Affordable Care Act. Much of the conversation has revolved around Medicaid and rightly so.

In my home State, 4.7 million folks currently rely on Medicaid. It is an important safety net program for people who are in low-income status—so for poorer folks. For those Americans, I want to make sure they understand, notwithstanding all the scare tactics, Medicaid is not going away.

Now, one of the common refrains is that Medicaid spending is slashed in the Better Care Act, but the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that Medicaid spending will grow by $74 billion over 10 years. So when they have talked about it being cut, it actually grows by $71 billion over 4 years.

I would also point out there are some who think the current rate of spending on Medicaid can go forward unabated without any changes, and that is simply not true. We know that according to the Congressional Research Service, Medicaid spending across the country totaled $494 billion in 2014. I guess that was the last year for which full statistics were available—$494 billion. If we do nothing to check the rate of growth of Medicaid spending, in 2023, it will be $835 billion. So you go from $494 billion to $835 billion. We simply cannot keep up with that pace of spending.

Many of us—the Presiding Officer being one of them—are concerned about cuts in our military, which is the one thing the Federal Government has to do because nobody else can do it. Right now, we have seen, during the last administration, cuts of about 20 percent in our defense spending.

Well, when you have runaway spending in entitlement programs like Medicaid, where nobody is placed on a budget and forced to spend wisely and efficiently, essentially by forcing the Federal Government to spend $835 billion for Medicaid spending alone, that is going to crowd out a lot of other meritorious and important spending, including for defense spending as well.

So we need to make sure Medicaid is there but that Medicaid is put on a responsible budget that grows year after year. In fact, during the life of this particular bill, over the next 10 years, it will go up $71 billion.

Here is another thing. Our friends across the aisle act like Medicaid is the very best program to come down the pike. Well, it is not, and there are a number of reasons for that. One is that Medicaid recipients don't always get the quality of care or the access to care we would hope for. That is because the States, which set the rate of reimbursement of doctors for Medicare beneficiaries, set it so low that it is roughly half the amount that is reimbursed based on private insurance. That is the reason why, in 2000, 67 percent of Texas physicians accepted new Medicaid patients. Today, it is 31 percent. So if you are on Medicaid, there is a two-thirds chance you will not be able to find a doctor to see you as a Medicaid beneficiary.

What we have done, instead, in the Better Care Act—particularly for the single adult population between 100 percent and 135 percent of the Federal poverty level—is, we said we will give you a refundable tax credit you can use to buy private insurance. Private insurance is highly preferable to Medicaid because, for one thing, it reimburses physicians at a higher rate and gives people greater access to physicians, hospitals, and greater quality of care. In my State alone, in the State of Texas, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, as many as 600,000 new low-income Texans will benefit from the provisions of the Better Care Act. It will help qualify them for a tax credit not available to them under ObamaCare.

Simply throwing money at Medicaid will not help people at all. We need to reform Medicaid and make it more efficient. Frankly, one of the things I did back when we were debating the Affordable Care Act in the Senate Finance Committee, I actually filed an amendment that said Members of Congress would go on Medicaid. Well, it failed, but the point I was trying to make is that if Members of Congress were on Medicaid, we would fix Medicaid. Right now, it is substandard healthcare for the reasons I mentioned. Two-thirds of the doctors in my State alone refuse to see a new Medicaid patient because it pays them so far under the standard of private insurance or even Medicare.

By providing low-income Americans access to private insurance instead of Medicaid, we can assist those who were previously left out of the healthcare market and will now be able to purchase a plan of their choice perhaps for the first time. Unless we act, we are going to continue to see skyrocketing premiums and deductibles and lost coverage.

The American people were told time and time again that under ObamaCare costs would go down and they would be able to keep their doctor, which has proven not to be the case.

I mentioned before on the floor of the Senate that in my previous life as attorney general of Texas, we had something called the Consumer Protection Division, and if some business made false claims about a service or product to the American people when it came to their healthcare, the U.S. Government would take them to court and we would win because it is simply a deceptive trade practice in that context. It is deception. It is deceit. Unfortunately, the American people were bamboozled by promises that were not kept.

We also know that about $1 trillion in ObamaCare taxes—new taxes that were imposed to pay for ObamaCare—have ultimately been saddled on American families with higher costs for healthcare. When ObamaCare was passed and all these new taxes were passed, my friends across the aisle acted as though they would simply be absorbed by somebody, but we all know that simple economics means that ultimately the consumers are the people who actually pay the tab. They are the ones who end up paying the taxes.

Some of our colleagues on the other side recognized the destructive nature of the Affordable Care Act tax scheme. For example, five Democratic Senators, including my colleagues from Minnesota, voted to repeal the medical device tax just 2 years ago. The medical device tax was a draconian form of taxation. It wasn't based on income—in other words, where you could deduct your expenses and just pay taxes on your net income—it was a gross receipts tax. In other words, it said in effect that everything you have earned before you deduct your costs of doing business is going to be taxed at a given rate, and that was true of the medical device tax.

Perversely, a tax on medical devices meant not only did the jobs to produce those medical devices move offshore, in the case of one Texas-based company, they moved their business essentially to Costa Rica in order to avoid the taxes because they simply couldn't afford to pay them and stay in business and keep the jobs they had.

It was also a tax on innovation, and that is the reason we saw a bipartisan response to repeal the medical device tax just 2 years ago, because this tax has chased away jobs and innovation in the medical sector and saddled consumers with higher costs.

By repealing those taxes in the Better Care Act, we not only will lower the bill at the pharmacy or the doctor's office, but we encourage competition, and that is common sense and ultimately benefits consumers.

Our plan also protects consumers from government mandates requiring

them to buy insurance that they don't want and can't afford. This way, families can choose what works best for them, free from the penalties by the government. Some individuals may choose to go with no plan at all.

The dirty little secret about the Affordable Care Act is that it can't work without a government mandate that you buy government-approved health insurance or else you pay a penalty. I can't think of any other instance where the government says ''You do what we say, or we are going to punish you and penalize you,'' as the Affordable Care Act does.

Even with the individual mandate and this threat of a penalty, we know that about 28 million Americans are currently not covered by insurance. Many of them are covered by so-called hardship exceptions. About 6.5 million of them just pay the penalty because it is cheaper to pay the penalty than it is to buy the insurance because the prices are so high.

When some of the critics say that without this economic gun to the head of a penalty, people will choose not to buy insurance for themselves, that is a choice they will make as Americans. We believe in freedom of choice, and when the marketplace provides a product that they believe adds value at a price they can afford, that is when consumers buy a product or a service. But they shouldn't have to do it because the government forces them to do so and penalizes them if they don't. The Better Care Act gives people the ability, free from a government mandate, to choose not to buy something they don't want. The Washington-forced mandates are gone.

The nonpartisan budget office has estimated that under our plan, average premiums will decrease by nearly one-third in 3 years.

These are some of the important facts we need to be debating, not the misrepresentations that unfortunately seem to fill the void.

I have shared multiple stories from my constituents back home in the last few weeks on the floor, and I plan to keep doing that as we continue our work on this legislation. The stories that I and my colleagues have heard are what have inspired me and motivated me from the beginning of this entire process. In fact, it is our job to represent our constituents. I would encourage all of our colleagues to listen to their own States and to share the trials of their constituents as well because the status quo is simply unacceptable. The Democratic leader has said as much. He said that if we set aside the Better Care Act and are actually interested in helping ''fix'' ObamaCare, they are willing to do that. But do you know what that is? Basically, what that represents is a huge, multimillion-dollar bailout of insurance companies without any other reform. That is what our Democratic colleagues are supporting by their failure to engage with us in making sure there are reforms in addition to the other things that we do.

The other alternative plan—you might ask: Well, if Obamacare didn't work as was advertised—which it clearly hasn't—and something needs to be done, what does that something look like?

In the case of our friend the Senator from Vermont, Mr. BERNIE SANDERS, he said: I have an idea. Let's just make the Federal Government provide insurance coverage for everybody, single-payer.

Well, that is simply a solution we can't afford when we look at the trade-offs. It would essentially supplant all the private insurance that people get from their employers and require incredible increases in taxes in order to do that across the board. So I don't think that is an alternative our friends across the aisle want to support. They love the mandate, they love penalizing free American citizens when they don't purchase a product the government mandates, but they are not going to defend that. They are not going to defend that. They certainly won't advocate, at least openly here on the floor, for a single-payer system.

We saw one committee of the legislature in California recently vote out a single-payer system. This was just one committee, I think, in one house. The estimated cost of a single-payer system in California alone was double the annual budget of the entire State. You can imagine what the numbers would be here at the national level.

Like any piece of legislation, our draft bill can be strengthened, and we would invite anyone in good faith who is interested in strengthening the bill to work with us to do so. We are going to continue to talk and listen and exchange ideas on how we can continue to make improvements, but in the end, the choice is clear: You either ultimately support ObamaCare and the status quo, or you are willing to try to work with us to produce something better that provides more affordable healthcare from the doctor and healthcare provider of your choice. That is simply the choice people are going to have. A ''no'' vote against the alternative is simply a vote for the status quo for ObamaCare, and we know where that is going to lead—it is going to lead with a big, multibillion-dollar bailout of insurance companies without any reform. That is what our Democratic colleagues are hoping for if we are unsuccessful. But we think there is a better way to approach this, one that brings down cost and maintains choices and the freedom of choice for the individual consumer.

We will continue to plow ahead with or without their help because we think it is our duty to do so, and we have confidence that, working together, we can come up with a better care plan that suits the needs of Americans when it comes to their healthcare.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. WARREN. Madam 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. Madam President, from day one, this administration, President Trump, and congressional Republicans have attacked rules that protect working families.

Just 1 hour after taking the oath of office, President Trump indefinitely suspended a plan that made it easier for working families to be able to afford a mortgage. Ten days later, he issued an Executive order that requires agencies to identify and eliminate two rules for every one new rule they issue, and that was just the beginning. Congressional Republicans spent the first few months of the year eliminating rules that protected workers, students, and families. They killed a rule that required companies in dangerous industries to track when their employees were injured. They even killed a rule that helped keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill.

These rules all had one thing in common—they all made sure the public health, safety, and security of Americans came ahead of industry's bottom line.

Oh, and there was a second thing in common for these rules: Industry hated them. With President Trump in office and Republicans in the majority in Congress, those industries were ready to cash in, and they had their wish list ready.

Although the attack on public-centered rules has increased in intensity during this administration, I just want to say it is not new. Powerful companies have long understood that the fight in Congress is just the first of many battles. If Big Business can't weaken or kill bills they don't like in Congress, they turn their attention to the agencies tasked with implementing those laws, working to tilt the rulemaking process in their favor, and they don't waste any time getting started.

Long before rules are even announced, giant corporations intensely lobby agencies—setting up meeting after meeting—to make sure the agencies will prioritize corporate interests. As rules wind their way through the rulemaking process, the lobbying intensifies. Companies bury agencies in mountains of expensive, industry-funded comments. They cite sham research and bought-and-paid-for experts. If, at the end of that long, arduous process, a strong, public-centered rule is published anyway, those companies sue, looking to busy judges who are unfamiliar with the issues to overturn the decision of expert agencies.

There are no two ways about it. The rulemaking process is broken. There are far too many opportunities for giant corporations to influence the

rulemaking process, and there are far too few opportunities for meaningful public participation, but Republicans don't want to fix this problem—no way. They want to make the rulemaking process work even better for their corporate buddies and work even harder against American families.

And, boy, did they pick the right person to lead the charge. President Trump nominated Neomi Rao—a law school professor who advocates for weakening and handcuffing agencies—to run the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs known as OIRA.

OIRA is a small, little-known but intensely powerful office that renews economically significant Federal rules. Before the Department of Labor can issue a rule on workplace safety, for example, or the Environmental Protection Agency can issue a rule restricting water pollution or the Department of Education can issue a rule protecting students from shady, for-profit colleges, that rule must be submitted to OIRA to sign off. If OIRA doesn't like the rule, it can change the rule or hold it up for months at a time. When a rule finally makes it out of the OIRA ringer, chances are that any changes will be slanted in favor of corporate interests.

Professor Rao's view of agencies makes her the wrong person to lead this powerful agency. She believes judges should pay less attention to the conclusions of experts at Federal agencies, and Professor Rao is especially critical of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—the CFPB. This is the agency that has forced the biggest corporations and banks in this country to return more than $12 billion directly to Americans they have cheated and held big banks like Wells Fargo accountable when they have ripped off customers.

Professor Rao says the CFPB's problem is its independence—seriously. Maybe Professor Rao thinks that little agency just doesn't kowtow enough to the big banks. If Professor Rao had her way, independent agencies like the CFPB would be handcuffed by OIRA, the agency she wants to run. It is no surprise that the Wall Street giants that have been trying to take down the CFPB for years love Professor Rao's views.

If confirmed, Professor Rao will be perfectly positioned to put her theories into practice. She will head the Trump administration's efforts to toss out the rules big businesses don't like. She will determine whether rules go through the slanted OIRA process. She will have a chance to gut strong rules that help working families.

The rulemaking process is broken, and there is a lot Congress should be doing to fix it, to try to make it work better for people all across this country—for workers and for families and for people who get cheated, but the Trump administration wants to go in the opposite direction.

Any Senator who believes corporations need more say in the rulemaking process should vote for Neomi Rao, but anyone who thinks we are supposed to be here to work for the American people will vote to reject her nomination.

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

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

Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rao nomination?

Mr. STRANGE. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted ''yea'' and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 156 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Ernst	McCain
Barrasso	Fischer	McCaskill
Blunt	Flake	McConnell
Boozman	Gardner	Moran
Burr	Graham	Paul
Capito	Grassley	Perdue
Carper	Hatch	Risch
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cochran	Heller	Rounds
Collins	Hoeven	Rubio
Corker	Inhofe	Sasse
Cornyn	Isakson	Scott
Cotton	Johnson	Shelby
Crapo	Kennedy	Strange
Cruz	King	Thune
Daines	Lankford	Toomey
Donnelly	Lee	Wicker
Enzi	Manchin	Young

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Feinstein	Merkley
Bennet	Franken	Murphy
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Murray
Booker	Harris	Nelson
Brown	Hassan	Peters
Cantwell	Heinrich	Reed
Cardin	Hirono	Sanders
Casey	Kaine	Schatz
Coons	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Shaheen
Duckworth	Markey	Stabenow
Durbin	Menendez	
Tester	Warner	Whitehouse
Van Hollen	Warren	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Murkowski	Sullivan	Udall
Portman	Tillis	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Rao nomination, 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.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of David C. Nye, of Idaho, to be United States District Judge for the District of Idaho.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Deb Fischer, Steve Daines, Luther Strange, Bob Corker, Thom Tillis, Tom Cotton, Tim Scott, Johnny Isakson, Richard C. Shelby, Michael B. Enzi, Richard Burr, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Roy Blunt, Todd Young.

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 David C. Nye, of Idaho, to be United States District Judge for the District of Idaho, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted ''yea.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 157 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Alexander	Brown	Cochran
Baldwin	Burr	Collins
Barrasso	Cantwell	Coons
Bennet	Capito	Corker
Blumenthal	Cardin	Cornyn
Blunt	Carper	Cortez Masto
Booker	Casey	Cotton
Boozman	Cassidy	Crapo

Cruz	Johnson	Rounds
Daines	Kaine	Rubio
Donnelly	Kennedy	Sanders
Duckworth	King	Sasse
Durbin	Klobuchar	Schatz
Enzi	Lankford	Schumer
Ernst	Leahy	Scott
Feinstein	Lee	Shaheen
Fischer	Manchin	Shelby
Flake	Markey	Stabenow
Franken	McCain	Strange
Gardner	McCaskill	Tester
Gillibrand	McConnell	Thune
Graham	Menendez	Tillis
Grassley	Merkley	Toomey
Harris	Moran	Udall
Hassan	Murphy	Van Hollen
Hatch	Murray	Warner
Heinrich	Nelson	Warren
Heitkamp	Paul	Whitehouse
Heller	Perdue	Wicker
Hirono	Peters	Wyden
Hoeven	Reed	Young
Inhofe	Risch	
Isakson	Roberts	

NOT VOTING—3

Murkowski	Portman	Sullivan

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 97, and the nays are 0.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David C. Nye, of Idaho, to be United States District Judge for the District of Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

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.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD–423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17–34, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Australia for defense articles and services estimated to cost $101.4 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

J.W. RIXEY,
Vice Admiral, USN, Director.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–34

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Australia

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* $100.0 million.

Other $1.4 million.

Total $101.4 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Thirty-two (32) Multifunctional Information Distribution Systems—Joint Tactical Radio System (MIDS JTRS) with four channel Concurrent Multi-Network (CMN–4).

Thirty-nine (39) AN/ALQ–214A(V)4 Countermeasure Systems.

Non-MDE includes: Also included in this sale are system integration and testing, software development/integration, test sets and support equipment, spare and repair parts, publications and technical documents, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy (XX–P–GQF A1).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: AT–P–SAF—$2.2B—02 May 07 (F/A–18F aircraft procurement).

AT–P–GQY—$358M—6 May 11 (first AF/A–18F sustainment).

AT–P–LEN—$992M—13 September 12 (Airborne Electronic Attack kit procurement).

AT–P–SCI—$1.3B—4 July 13 (EA–18G aircraft procurement).

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: Jul 10 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Australia—Upgrades for F/A–18E/F Super Hornet Aircraft

The Government of Australia requested the possible sale of thirty-two (32) Multifunctional Information Distribution System Joint Tactical Radio System (MIDS JTRS) with four channel Concurrent Multi-Network (CMN–4), and thirty-nine (39) AN/ALQ–214A(V)4 Countermeasure Systems. This will also include all system integration and testing, component improvement, test and tools equipment upgrades, support equipment replenishment, supply support, publications and technical document updates, personnel training and training equipment upgrades, aircrew trainer device upgrades, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance and other related elements of logistical and program support. The total estimated program cost is $101.4 million.

This sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of a major contributor to political stability, security, and economic development in the Western Pacific. Australia is an important Major non-NATO Ally and partner that contributes significantly to peacekeeping and humanitarian operations around the world. It is vital to the U.S. national interest to assist our ally in developing and maintaining a strong and ready self-defense capability.

The proposed sale will improve Australia's capability in current and future coalition efforts. This equipment will help the Royal Australian Air Force better communicate with and protect its F/A–18 aircraft, and the addition of MIDS JTRS will accomplish the goal of making U.S. and Australian aircraft more interoperable when supporting operational forces. Australia will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment does not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The prime contractors will be the Harris Corporation, Melbourne, FL. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale may require the assignment of U.S. contractor representatives to Australia which will be determined at a later date.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–34

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. Multifunctional Information Distribution System (MIDS) Joint Tactical Radio System (JTRS) Concurrent Multi-Network (CMN–4) is classified CONFIDENTIAL. MIDS JTRS CMN–4 is a secure data and voice communication network using the Link–16 architecture. The system provides enhanced situational awareness, positive identification of participants with the network, secure fighter-to-fighter connectivity, and secure voice capability. It provides three major functions: Air Control, Wide Area Surveillance, and Fighter-to-Fighter. The MIDS JTRS CMN–4 can be used to transfer data in Air-to-Air, Air-to-Surface and Fighter-to-Fighter scenarios.

2. The AN/ALQ–214A(V)4 is an advanced airborne Integrated Defensive Electronic Countermeasures (IDECM) programmable modular automated system capable of intercepting, identifying, processing received radar signals (pulsed and continuous) and applying an optimum probability of survival from a variety of surface-to-air and air-to-air RF threats. The system operates in a standalone or Electronic Warfare (EW) suite mode. In the EW suite mode, the system operates various dispensable countermeasures and the onboard radar in the F/A–18E/F in a coordinated, non-interference manner, sharing information for enhanced information. The ALQ–214 was designed to operate in a high-density Electromagnetic Hostile Environment with the ability to identify and counter a wide variety of multiple threats including those with Doppler characteristics. Hardware with the AN/ALQ–214A(V)4 is classified CONFIDENTIAL.

3. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures or equivalent system which might

reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

4. A determination has been made that Australia can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Australia.

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17–40, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of the Netherlands for defense articles and services estimated to cost $58.2 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

GREG KAUSNER
(For J.W. Rixey, Vice Admiral, USN, Director).

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–40

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: The Government of the Netherlands.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* $30.0 million.

Other $28.2 million.

Total $58.2 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case NE–B–WGC for Aircraft Survivability Equipment (ASE) for the Netherlands' AH–64D Apache helicopters, was below the congressional notification threshold at $8.2M (all non-MDE) and included a total of thirty-three (33) AN/AVR–2B laser detecting sets and communications, logistics and support equipment. The Netherlands has requested the case be amended to include the Common Missile Warning Systems (CMWS). This amendment, which will add $30M of MDE and $20M of non-MDE, will push the current case above the congressional notification threshold, requiring notification of the entire case before the amendment can be offered.

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Thirty-two (32) AN/AAR–57A(V)7 Common Missile Warning Systems (CMWS).

Non-MDE: Thirty-three (33) AN/AVR–2B laser detecting sets, mission equipment, hardware and services required to implement customer unique post modifications, communications and navigation equipment, special tools and test equipment, ground support equipment, technical data, publications, MWO/ECP, technical assistance, and training, and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (XX–B–WGC Amend 1).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: NE–B–WES.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: July 10, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Government of the Netherlands—AN/AAR–57A(V)7 Common Missile Warning System (CMWS)

The Government of the Netherlands has requested the possible sale of thirty-two (32) AN/AAR–57A(V)7 Common Missile Warning Systems (CMWS). This would be in addition to the thirty-three (33) AN/AVR–2B laser detecting sets with various support elements included in an earlier FMS case valued at $8.2M. Also included in the amended FMS case would be mission equipment, hardware and services required to implement customer unique post modifications, communication and navigation equipment, special tools and test equipment, ground support equipment, technical data, publications, MWO/ECP, technical assistance, and training, and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total case value is $58.2 million.

This proposed sale will enhance the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of the Netherlands which has been, and continues to be an important force for political stability and economic progress in Europe. It is vital to the U.S. national interest to assist the Netherlands to develop and maintain a strong and ready self-defense capability.

The proposed sale will improve the Netherlands' capability to meet current and future threats and will be employed on the Netherlands' AH–64D Apache helicopters. The Netherlands will use the enhanced capability to strengthen its homeland defense, deter regional threats, and provide direct support to coalition and security cooperation operations. The Netherlands will have no difficulty absorbing these systems into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of these systems will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor will be BAE Systems, Nashua, NH. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government personnel or contractor representatives to the Netherlands.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–40

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The AN/AAR–57A(V)7 CMWS is the detection component of the suite of countermeasures designed to increase survivability of current generation combat aircraft and specialized special operations aircraft against the threat posed by infrared guided missiles.

2. The KIV–77, is a Common Crypto Applique for Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) that provides Mode 4/5 capability. The KIV–77 can be removed from the host and stored as an UNCLASSIFIED Controlled Cryptographic Item (CCI).

3. A determination has been made that the Government of the Netherlands can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This proposed sale is necessary to the furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the policy justification.

4. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to the Government of the Netherlands.

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC,

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17–35, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Romania for defense articles and services estimated to cost $3.9 billion. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

J.W. RIXEY,
Vice Admiral, USN, Director.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–35

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Romania.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* $1.3 billion.

Other $2.6 billion.

Total $3.9 billion.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: Seven (7) Phased Array Tracking to Intercept of Target (Patriot) Configuration–3+ Modernized Fire Units consisting of:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Seven (7) AN/MPQ–65 Radar Sets.

Seven (7) AN/MSQ–132 Engagement Control Stations.

Thirteen (13) Antenna Mast Groups.

Twenty-eight (28) M903 Launching Stations.

Fifty-six (56) Patriot MIM–104E Guidance Enhanced Missile Tactical Ballistic Missile (GEM–T) Missiles.

One hundred sixty-eight (168) Patriot Advanced Capability–3 (PAC–3) Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) Missiles.

Seven (7) Electrical Power Plants (EPP) III.

Non-MDE includes: Also included with this request are communications equipment, tools and test equipment, support equipment, prime movers, generators, publications and technical documentation, training equipment, spare and repair parts, personnel training, TAFT team, U.S. Government and contractor technical, engineering, and logistics support services,

Systems Integration and Checkout (SICO), field office support, and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army.

(v) Prior Related Cases. if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: July 10, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Romania—Patriot Air Defense System and Related Support and Equipment

The Government of Romania has requested the possible sale of seven (7) Patriot Configuration–3+ Modernized Fire Units consisting of: seven (7) AN/MPQ–65 radar sets, seven (7) AN/MSQ–132 engagement control stations,

thirteen (13) antenna mast groups, twenty-eight (28) M903 launching stations, fifty-six (56) Patriot MIM–104E Guidance Enhanced Missile–TBM (GEM–T) missiles, one hundred and sixty-eight (168) Patriot Advanced Capability–3 (PAC–3) Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) missiles, and seven (7) Electrical Power Plants (EPP) III. Also included with this request are communications equipment, tools and test equipment, support equipment, prime movers, generators, publications and technical documentation, training equipment, spare and repair parts, personnel training, TAFT team, U.S. Government and contractor technical, engineering, and logistics support services, Systems Integration and Checkout (SICO), field office support, and other related elements of logistics and program support. The total estimated program cost is $3.9 billion.

This proposed sale will enhance the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of a NATO ally that has been, and continues to be an important force for political stability and economic progress within Europe. The proposed sale of the Patriot system will support Romania's needs for its own self-defense and support NATO defense goals.

Romania will use the Patriot missile system to strengthen its homeland defense and deter regional threats. The proposed sale will increase the defensive capabilities of the Romanian military to guard against aggression and shield the NATO allies who often train and operate within Romania's borders. Romania should have no difficulty absorbing this system into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of these missiles and equipment will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The prime contractors will be Raytheon Corporation in Andover, Massachusetts, and Lockheed-Martin in Dallas, Texas. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require approximately 30 U.S. Government and 40 contractor representatives to travel to Romania for an extended period for equipment de-processing/fielding, system checkout, training, and technical and logistics support.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–35

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The Patriot Air Defense System contains classified CONFIDENTIAL hardware components, SECRET tactical software and CRITICAL/SENSITIVE technology. Patriot ground support equipment and Patriot missile hardware is classified CONFIDENTIAL and the associated launcher hardware is UNCLASSIFIED. Information on system performance capabilities, effectiveness, survivability, missile seeker capabilities, select software/software documentation and test data are classified up to and including SECRET. The items requested represent significant technological advances for Romania Patriot. The Patriot Air Defense System continues to hold a significant technology lead over other surface-to-air missile systems in the world.

2. The Patriot Air Defense System's sensitive/critical technology is primarily in the area of design and production know-how and primarily inherent in the design, development and/or manufacturing data related to certain components. The list of components is classified CONFIDENTIAL. For more information contact the PEO Missiles and Space Lower Tier Project Office.

3, The loss of this hardware, software, documentation and/or data could permit development of information which may lead to a significant threat to future U.S. military operations. If an adversary were to obtain this sensitive technology, the missile system effectiveness could be compromised through reverse engineering techniques.

4. This proposed sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification. Moreover, the benefits to be derived from this sale, as outlined in the Policy Justification, outweigh the potential damage that could result if the sensitive technology were revealed to unauthorized persons.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Romania.

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17–31, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Australia for defense articles and services estimated to cost $50 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

GREG KAUSNER
(For J.W. Rixey, Vice Admiral, USN, Director).

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–31

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Australia

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* $49 million.

Other $1 million.

Total $50 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Six thousand thirty (6,030) rounds of M865 120mm Target Practice Cone Stabilized Discarding Sabot-Tracer (TPCSDS–T) Tank Projectiles.

Eight thousand six hundred ten (8,610) rounds of Ml002 120mm Target Practice Multipurpose Tracer (TPMP–T) Tank Projectiles.

Non-MDE includes: Also included are U.S. Government technical assistance, technical data, and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (XX–B–UJL).

(v) Prior Related Cases. if any: AT–B–UGR.

(vi) Sales Commission. Fee. etc ., Paid. Offered. or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: None.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: July 10, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Australia—120mm Tank Ammunition and Related Support Services

The Government of Australia has requested the possible sale of six thousand thirty (6,030) rounds of M865 120mm Target Practice Cone Stabilized Discarding Sabot-Tracer (TPCSDS–T) Tank Projectiles and eight thousand six hundred ten (8,610) rounds of M1002 120mm Target Practice Multipurpose Tracer (TPMP–T) Tank Projectiles. Also included are U.S. Government technical services, technical data, and other related elements of logistical and program support. The total estimated program cost is $50 million.

This sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of a major contributor to political stability, security, and economic development in the Western Pacific. Australia is an important Major non-NATO Ally and partner that contributes significantly to peacekeeping and humanitarian operations around the world. It is vital to the U.S. national interest to assist our ally in developing and maintaining a strong and ready self-defense capability.

The proposed sale of 120mm tank ammunition will improve Australia's capability to meet out-year operational readiness and training requirements. Australia will use this ammunition to help sustain necessary training levels for its tank operators. Australia will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

This requirement will be provided from U.S. Army inventory. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. or contractor representatives to Australia.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17–23, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of the United Kingdom for defense articles and services estimated to cost $1.035 billion. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

J.W. RIXEY,
Vice Admiral, USN, Director.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–23

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: United Kingdom.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* $887 million.

Other $148 million.

Total $1.035 billion.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): Two thousand seven hundred forty-seven (2,747) Joint Light Tactical Vehicles (JLTV).

Non-MDE: Also included with this request are baseline integration kits, basic issue item kits, B–kit armor, engine arctic kits, fording kits, run-flat kits, spare tire kits, silent watch kits, power expansion kits cargo cover kits, maintainer and operator training,

U.S. government technical assistance and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army.

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission. Fee. etc., Paid. Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: July 10, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

United Kingdom—Joint Light Tactical Vehicles (JLTV) and Accessories

The Government of the United Kingdom (UK) has requested a possible sale of up to two thousand seven hundred forty-seven (2,747) Joint Light Tactical Vehicles (JLTV). This possible sale also includes baseline integration kits, basic issue item kits, B-kit armor, engine arctic kits, fording kits, run-flat kits, spare tire kits, silent watch kits, power expansion kits cargo cover kits, maintainer and operator training, U.S. government technical assistance and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support. Total estimated cost is $1.035 billion.

This proposed sale supports the foreign policy and national security policies of the United States by helping to improve the security of a NATO ally which has been, and continues to be, an important partner on critical foreign policy and defense issues.

The proposed sale will help improve the UK's Light Tactical Vehicle Fleet and enhance its ability to meet current and future threats. The UK will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor of this sale will be Oshkosh Defense, LLC, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The procured items will require minimum contractor support until the foreign customer can eventually transition to internal organic support. There is no known offset agreement associated with this proposed sale.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–23

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. This sale will involve the release of sensitive technology to the Government of the United Kingdom. The Joint Light Tactical Vehicle platform is' classified as SECRET. The Joint Light Tactical Vehicle fleet will incorporate ballistic armor kits for protection from improvised explosive devices.

2.Sensitive and/or classified (up to SECRET) elements of the proposed Joint Light Tactical Vehicle include hardware and accessories, components and associated software: baseline integration kits, basic issue items, ballistic-kit armor, engine arctic kits, fording kits, run-flat kits, silent watch energy kits, power expansion kits and cargo covering kits.

3. A determination has been made that the United Kingdom can provide substantially the same degree of protection for this technology as the U.S. Government. This proposed sale is necessary in furtherance of U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

4. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the Government of the UK.

TRIBUTE TO DR. BENJAMIN TUGGLE

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to Dr. Benjamin Tuggle who served as the regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's southwest region. A skilled communicator and accomplished biologist, Dr. Tuggle dedicated more than 38 years of service to advancing the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

I had the opportunity to work directly with Dr. Tuggle on a number of issues important to Arizona, including restoring the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery, which is a key economic asset for Lower Colorado River communities. We may not have always agreed on agency policies, but Dr. Tuggle maintained an open dialogue and willingness to engage directly with local communities.

The challenges faced by the service and Region 2 are daunting. Our unique southwest landscape and wildlife are under constant threat from oppressive drought and catastrophic wildfire. Dr. Tuggle was rarely presented with easy decisions to make, but he always labored to strike the right balance between competing interests on complex issues. I thank him for his service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

225TH ANNIVERSARY OF PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

• Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the city of Paterson's 225th anniversary. Through the dedicated service of municipal employees, elected leaders, local volunteers, community activists, and, most importantly, the incredible residents who have supported and loved the city through many generations, the city of Paterson has grown and prospered, earning its reputation as an outstanding community in my home State.

The town of Paterson was officially established in 1792 through a charter signed by then-Governor of New Jersey, William Paterson. Paterson was one of the Nation's first planned industrial cities, a brainchild of one of our Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton, and the Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturers.

Because of Paterson's proximity to what was then called the Great Falls of the Passaic River, the city was at the forefront of the development of water power systems for industrial use. In fact, the energy harnessed from the Great Falls was crucial in the effort to establish industrial freedom from Britain. Today the Paterson Great Falls, a scenic and historic waterfall on the Passaic River, continues to be just as important to the city as it was when Paterson was first founded.

As a regional industrial epicenter, Paterson became the birthplace of many ''invention firsts,'' including the first steam and electric-powered model trains. After milling steel for the Union effort in the American Civil War, Paterson refocused to become the center of our Nation's silk industry, thus earning its nickname the ''Silk City.'' The city also played a vital role during our Nation's Second World War, serving as a hub for the aircraft engine manufacturing industry.

Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park served as the primary inspiration for William Carlos Williams' five-volume epic poem, Paterson. In 1950, Williams received the first National Book Award for Poetry for Paterson, Book III. Our beloved Silk City has weaved its way into the works of many other renowned American writers including Junot Diaz, John Updike, Jack Kerouac, and Allen Ginsberg.

In addition to literature, Paterson natives have served as esteemed representatives in these hallowed halls. I would be remiss if I recognized the city of Paterson without mentioning the contributions of two of its favorite sons, Congressman BILL PASCRELL, Jr., and the late Senator Frank Lautenberg, who have served New Jersey and our country with honor and distinction.

From Downtown Paterson's commercial historic district, to our national historical park, to Larry Doby Field, the architectural, natural, and cultural landmarks are abundant across this great city. Paterson is among our most diverse communities, attracting residents from dozens of different cultures who have greatly enriched the abundant tapestry of diversity and pluralism in the city of Paterson and across the entire State of New Jersey. I am delighted to have the opportunity to stand before you today to celebrate the profound history and legacy of New Jersey's third-largest city. I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the city of Paterson on this important milestone, sending our warmest greetings as it celebrates its incredible history and extending our best wishes as it looks toward the future.•

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF BMW GROUP PLANT SPARTANBURG

• Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the BMW Group Plant Spartanburg in Spartanburg, SC.

Twenty-five years ago, BMW decided to make an investment in South Carolina. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the risk and vision it took to begin this venture. The Spartanburg workforce has a world-renowned reputation and is second to none. Without this workforce, we would have nothing to celebrate, so it is with great pride that I extend my sincerest gratitude for all of their efforts.

In addition to the contributions BMW has made to South Carolina, we are also celebrating the strong relationship between Germany and the Palmetto State. Globalization and trade are crucial to South Carolina's economic success and play a huge role in maintaining a positive relationship with the United States and Germany. I am proud to be an owner of a made-in-South Carolina BMW X5 because it represents all that makes our country great.

BMW has been a gift that keeps on giving for South Carolina, and South Carolina has been a wise investment for BMW. Thank you to all the hard-working men and women of South Carolina who have made this day a possibility. It is because of their dedication and diligence that South Carolina continues to be a prime destination for companies looking to invest and grow.●

RECOGNIZING THE BILLINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY

● Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Billings Public Library for promoting a center of reading and learning for folks in Montana.

The Billings Public Library was established in 1901 and was named for Parmly Billings, the only member of the founding Billings family to reside in the city.

More than 100 years later, the 200,000-volume library has grown and expanded, entrenching itself deeply in the fabric of the Billings community. It has grown from one location to two and now has two mobile components to increase the number of people with access to the library's resources.

The Billings Public Library as an institution has also been tirelessly dedicated to Montana historical preservation through its ''Montana Collection,'' which has collected historical information about Montana since 1902.

Beyond providing families in Billings with access to information through books and computers, the Billings Public Library has provided residents with the opportunity to make their voice heard and participate in countless townhall meetings and listening sessions, including many on topics ranging from the future of our public lands to the quality of care at the VA.

The library will celebrate its 116th anniversary in August 2017, making it one of Montana's oldest and most cherished learning spaces. The Billings Public Library has had a profound impact on the city of Billings and is a true example of fine service to the Montana people.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF SISSETON, SOUTH DAKOTA

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Sisseton, SD. The town of Sisseton will be celebrating its quasquicentennial on June 14 through 16, 2017. Sisseton will host quasquicentennial events, which include food and craft vendors, various exhibits, entertainment, parades, athletic competitions, a veterans museum display, Native American flute music, a rodeo, and much more.

Sisseton is located on the northern edge of the Coteau des Prairies in Roberts County. The Sisseton area has long been known as a community enriched with Native American and immigrant history. It is home to more than 2,450 people and almost 200 businesses with many unique cultural and recreational opportunities. Since its founding 125 years ago, the community of Sisseton continues to serve as a strong example of South Dakota values and traditions.

I offer my congratulations to the citizens of Sisseton on their quasquicentennial celebration and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND RICHARD LEE BUCKINGHAM

● Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to an exceptional faith leader in my own neighborhood in Kensington, MD. After 32 years of gifted service to St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Kensington, the Reverend Richard Lee Buckingham will retire at the end of July and it is an occasion that deserves recognition and celebration.

My own family worships at St. Paul's, and my children have been the beneficiaries of Rick Buckingham's wise counsel and leadership. He has long directed programs at St. Paul's for the benefit of young people, and he is recognized throughout many faith communities as a leader in Christian education and the spiritual nourishment of teens and young adults.

Reverend Buckingham has served in ministry to the local church for 43 years and arrived at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in 1985. He has worked with nine different senior pastors, offering counsel and wisdom to each in his role as minister of education and youth.

Reverend Buckingham has instructed over 350 young people during confirmation classes and watched proudly as they took their vows of faith. He has led eight different trips to witness the realities of faith and conflict in the Holy Land; he escorted young leaders to eight different international gatherings of United Methodist Youth leaders; he organized 20 different youth mission trips to Appalachia, Puerto Rico, and places beyond; he has leveraged his own interest in church history to take students to places where they will learn about their faith and will conclude that work with a trip to Germany later this year to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's launch of the Protestant Reformation.

Rick Buckingham has always been on the go; always introducing young people to a wider world, mindful of the observation of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, that ''the world is our parish.'' He visits recent graduates of St. Paul's UMC at their colleges, conducts their weddings—34 to date—and takes them to annual rock-faith events in Ocean City, although I suspect he uses an occasional earplug.

The reverend is also recognized for his leadership as a deacon of the United Methodist Church, a designation with specific responsibilities, and he has given to his wider denomination as much as he has given to his own local congregation.

Rick Buckingham teaches us all how to be a ''humble servant'' in accordance with our faith and at a time when we need examples of what true community service, faith, and civility looks like in the public square. It is a personal honor for me to recognize this leader in my own church and a leader in the wider community beyond.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:02 p.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. 3003. An act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify provisions relating to assistance by States, and political subdivision of States, in the enforcement of Federal immigration laws, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3004. An act to amend section 276 of the Immigration and Nationality Act relating to reentry of removed aliens.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 67. Concurrent resolution urging the Government of the People's Republic of China to unconditionally release Liu Xiaobo, together with his wife Liu Xia, to allow them to freely meet with friends, family, and counsel and seek medical treatment wherever they desire.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 67. Concurrent resolution urging the Government of the People's Republic of China to unconditionally release Liu Xiaobo, together with his wife Liu Xia, to allow them to freely meet with friends, family, and counsel and seek medical treatment wherever they desire; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 123. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a default configuration that permits users to directly initiate a call to 9–1-1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–124).

By Mr. McCAIN, from the Committee on Armed Services, without amendment:

S. 1519. An original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–125).

By Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

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 (Rept. No. 115–126).

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. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 1518. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to enter into contracts with industry intermediaries for purposes of promoting the development of and access to apprenticeships in the technology sector, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. McCAIN:

S. 1519. An original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Armed Services; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 1520. A bill to expand recreational fishing opportunities through enhanced marine fishery conservation and management, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 1521. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce the interest rate caps for Federal Direct student loans, to eliminate loan origination fees on all Federal Direct student loans, and to provide for refinancing of Federal Direct student loans and Federal family education loans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. 1522. A bill to establish an Every Kid Outdoors program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1523. A bill to provide for additional safeguards with respect to imposing Federal mandates, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. Res. 216. A resolution calling on the Government of Iran to release unjustly detained United States citizens and legal permanent resident aliens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 45

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 45, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed and for other purposes.

S. 251

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) 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. 266

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 266, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Anwar Sadat in recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) 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. 334

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 334, a bill to clarify that a State has the sole authority to regulate hydraulic fracturing on Federal land within the boundaries of the State.

S. 378

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 378, a bill to amend titles 5 and 28, United States Code, to require the maintenance of databases on awards of fees and other expenses to prevailing parties in certain administrative proceedings and court cases to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors 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. 545

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 545, a bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

S. 622

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 622, a bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 683

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 683, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities.

S. 705

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 705, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 772

At the request of Mr. McCAIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 772, a bill to amend the PROTECT Act to make Indian tribes eligible for AMBER Alert grants.

S. 819

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 819, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 872

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 872, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 1112

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1112, a bill to support States in their work to save and sustain the health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and in the postpartum period, to eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes for pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths, to identify solutions to improve health care quality and health outcomes for mothers, and for other purposes.

S. 1124

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1124, a bill to grant the Director of the United States Marshals Service authority to appoint criminal investigators in the excepted service.

S. 1146

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1146, a bill to enhance the ability of the Office of the National Ombudsman to assist small businesses in meeting regulatory requirements and develop outreach initiatives to promote awareness of the services the Office of the National Ombudsman provides, and for other purposes.

S. 1186

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1186, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to designate certain entities as centers of excellence for domestic maritime workforce training and education, and for other purposes.

S. 1256

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1256, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company in recognition of their unique and distinguished service as a ''Ghost Army'' that conducted deception operations in Europe during World War II.

S. 1311

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1311, a bill to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States.

S. 1312

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1312, a bill to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States.

S. 1325

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1325, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the authorities of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire, recruit, and train employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1343

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1343, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend and modify certain charitable tax provisions.

S. 1426

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1426, a bill to amend the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act to expand the purposes of the corporation, to designate the United States Center for Safe Sport, and for other purposes.

S. 1427

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1427, a bill to provide States with the option of applying for and receiving temporary waivers for the States to experiment with new approaches that integrate Federal programs in order to provide more coordinated and holistic solutions to families in need, and for other purposes.

S. 1463

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1463, a bill to amend the Financial Stability Act of 2010 to modify the term of the independent member of the Financial Stability Oversight Council.

S. 1465

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1465, a bill to terminate the prohibitions on the exportation and importation of natural gas, and for other purposes.

S. 1489

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 1489, a bill to amend section 3312 of title 38, United States Code, to restore Post-9/11 Educational Assistance and other relief for veterans affected by school closures, and for other purposes.

S. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S.J. RES. 16

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 16, a joint resolution approving the discontinuation of the process for consideration and automatic implementation of the annual proposal of the Independent Medicare Advisory Board under section 1899A of the Social Security Act.

S. RES. 102

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 102, a resolution reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Mexico, and recognizing bilateral cooperation that advances the national security and national interests of both countries.

S. RES. 201

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 201, a resolution affirming the importance of title IX, applauding the increase in educational opportunities available to women and girls, and recognizing the tremendous amount of work left to be done to further increase those opportunities.

S. RES. 211

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 211, a resolution condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya.

S. RES. 213

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 213, a resolution honoring the memory of Dallas Police Department Senior Corporal Lorne Ahrens, Sergeant Michael Smith, Officer Michael Krol, Officer Patrick Zamarripa, and Dallas Area Rapid Transit Police Officer Brent Thompson, who were killed during the attack in Dallas, Texas, that occurred 1 year ago, on July 7, 2016.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 1521. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce the interest rate caps for Federal Direct student loans, to eliminate loan origination fees on all Federal Direct student loans, and to provide for refinancing of Federal Direct student loans and Federal family education loans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to talk about a heavy financial burden that too many of our fellow Americans are being forced to deal with. What I am talking about is student loans. You may be surprised to know that the second largest amount of debt in America, next to home mortgage debt, is student loan debt. Student loan debt is $1.3 trillion more than all the credit card debt combined in America. Graduates from the class of 2016 have more than $37,000 in student loan debt, on average, when they graduate.

To make matters worse, the Federal Government last week announced that

it was increasing interest rates on Federal student loans for this coming school year, which starts in September. For undergraduate students, rates are increased from last year at 3.76 percent to 4.45 percent, almost three-quarters of a percent. That started on July 1.

Well, our economy is built on the ingenuity and creativity of young entrepreneurs who have taken a risk on something new, but today, instead of sending our graduates off to be creative and conquer the world, we are sending them off with a tremendous amount of debt that they are struggling to afford.

While I was in Florida last week over the July 4th recess, I met with a group of recent graduates, and we wanted to discuss their student loans. They were not shy about telling me about it. Many of them had high interest rates. They wondered how they were going to pay off that debt, how they were going to be able to be unshackled from that financial burden so they could get on about the business of building their career and starting a family.

Let me give you some examples of the students I met with. One young lady graduated from the University of Central Florida in 2015 with $50,000 in student loan debt. The interest rate on her debt was 4.85 percent. She knows that her parents, who have helped her before—they are small business owners—are not going to be able to continue to help her financially. Even so, she was the first person in her family to graduate from college. That student is currently attending George Washington University for graduate school, after which she is estimating her total debt will be $90,000 in student loans. She told me about what every student longs to do: Purchase a home, start a family, and get on with their career. But that is increasingly becoming a pipe dream for millennials because of the burden of student loan debt.

I met another student from Deltona, FL, who works as a social worker for the homeless. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in social work and a master's degree in the same from Florida State. She has dedicated her life to public service and helping the most vulnerable among us, yet she is facing $75,000 in student loan debt while carrying interest rates that range from 5.4 percent to 6.8 percent.

In Florida alone, students graduating with a 4-year degree are leaving with an average of more than $23,000 in student loan debt. The thought of trying to start a career with that much debt is discouraging when some students, even after attending college in the first place, are still struggling. They want to go on to grad school or they are still in school wanting to finish their degree, but then they have that constant fear of having more and more debt when they graduate. That is not in anyone's interest—not the student's, not the family's, not the community's, and it is certainly not in the country's best interest. If we really want to build a strong middle class, we have to make higher education more affordable.

That is why today I am introducing legislation to lower the cap on student loan interest and the so-called lender origination fees and to allow those with existing loans to refinance at a lower rate; namely, 4 percent.

Remember I told you about that one student I met who had loans that went anywhere from 5.5 up to 6.8 percent? That was the interest rate in that particular year of their education. I think they ought to be able to refinance all of that at a maximum of 4 percent.

The bill that I am filing today, which we are calling the Student Loan Relief Act, would cap student loan interest rates for undergraduates at 4 percent, graduates at 5 percent, and parents at a cap of 6 percent. It would also help students borrow less by ending the loan origination fees the government charges students to process their loan. For example, if it is a $10,000 loan, they will take out a loan origination fee of $400, so the actual loan the student gets is $9,600. These fees are taken out before the student receives the loan. The bill we are filing would eliminate those fees all together.

One other thing the bill would allow for any borrower with an existing Federal student loan is to refinance their loans one time to a lower rate. Once the Federal Government sets the student loan interest rates for the year, they are fixed now under current law for the lifetime of that loan and they can't be refinanced, even if the rates go lower. That is certainly not in the interest of the student. For example, borrowers who took out loans between July of 2006 and July of 2013 likely have a fixed rate of 6.8 percent. Despite the significant drop in interest rates since 2013, currently those borrowers are barred from refinancing their existing loans. That is not common sense. Between 2006 and 2013, the interest rate on student loan debt got as high as 6.8 percent. Students who took out loans during that time are now stuck with those rates. They can't refinance that debt as you could with a home loan. This bill would fix that by letting those borrowers refinance their debt with the new loans that have the lower interest rates.

Capping interest rates, ending loan origination fees, and allowing borrowers to refinance existing loans would certainly help make education more affordable for our students. It would help to ease the financial stress that is weighing down our economy and keeping some graduates from making the types of investments that traditionally lead to stronger middle-class membership like, for example, home ownership.

Sometimes, in all of the partisan back-and-forth, some folks begin to forget why we are here: to serve the people. I urge our colleagues to take a serious look at this bill and join with me in helping those we represent.

We can't continue to leave our graduates saddled with so much student debt and no way out. We have to do something to ease the burden, and I believe this is a good way to start.

I would just conclude by recalling what I said at the outset: You may be surprised to learn that student loan debt is the second largest debt carried in America next to home mortgage debt.

You can take all the credit card debt in America and combine it all and it is not as much as the $1.3 trillion of student loan debt that is carried today. We need to help those students, and thereby we are helping our country.

NOTICE: REGISTRATION OF MASS MAILINGS

The filing date for the 2017 second quarter Mass Mailing report is Tuesday, July 25, 2017.

An electronic option is available on Webster that will allow forms to be submitted via a fillable pdf document. If your office did no mass mailings during this period, please submit a form that states ''none.''

Mass mailing registrations or negative reports can be submitted electronically or delivered to the Senate Office of Public Records, 232 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510–7116.

The Senate Office of Public Records is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For further information, please contact the Senate Office of Public Records at (202) 224–0322.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to Public Law 101–509, the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Carol A. Mandel of New York.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2:15 p.m., Tuesday, July 11; 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 and resume consideration of the Nye nomination; finally, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Nye 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 Senator MERKLEY.

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

The Senator from Oregon.

CLIMATE DISRUPTION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, climate disruption is the seminal challenge of our generation. It affects everything from our farming to our fishing to our forestry. We see the impact in disappearing glaciers, shrinking ice sheets, melting permafrost, dying coral reefs, more powerful storms, and migrating animals and insects.

In response, communities across the globe are transforming their energy economies. They are increasing the energy efficiency of their buildings and their vehicles and their appliances, and they are replacing carbon-polluting fossil fuel energy with clean, renewable energy.

How much do you know about the changes underway? Let's find out.

Welcome to episode No. 2 of the Senate Climate Disruption Quiz.

First question: Which car company announced just last week that all of its new models will have an electric motor starting in 2019? Was it Toyota, which has the Prius currently, the Prius plug-in? Was it Volvo, known for its safety, or Honda, which advocates its fuel efficiency, or Ford, which has the all-electric Focus?

The answer is B: Volvo. On July 5, Volvo announced that beginning in 2019, every new model in its fleet will have some form of electric propulsion. These cars will include so-called ''mild'' hybrids featuring regenerative braking like the Prius, plug-in hybrids like the Volt, and fully electric cars like the Tesla. Volvo intends to do all of these forms.

Now with electric cars in mind, let's move on to question No. 2: Which European country plans to ban the sale of new diesel and gas vehicles by the year 2040? Is it France or Spain or the United Kingdom or Switzerland? The answer is France.

Last week, on July 6, France's Environment Minister Nicolas Hulot announced a new environmental plan for his country to reflect France's commitment to the Paris climate agreement. Minister Hulot not only said that France will ban the sale of new diesel and gas cars starting in 2040, but will seek to shut down all of its coal-powered electric plants over the next 5 years—by the year 2022—and to pursue a ''carbon-neutral'' economy by the year 2050. That is the same as a net zero production of carbon dioxide.

Let's turn to a different part of the world. Let's go to the Southern Hemisphere. A crack in the Antarctic ice shelf will soon create an iceberg of what size? Will it be the size of Oregon, my home State, which is roughly 100,000 square miles; or the size of the Superdome in New Orleans, about 6 acres; or how about the size of Manhattan, 23 square miles; or Delaware, which is much larger, at about 2,000 square miles? The answer is D, Delaware.

The crack in this ice shelf will create an iceberg about the size of Delaware.

This is Antarctica's fourth largest ice shelf. The crack is now 120 miles long, and in some spots now it is 2 miles wide, and there are just 3 miles left in which it is attached to the ice shelf. So given the stresses that are being applied to that vast sheet of ice, the break is expected to happen in the next couple of weeks. When that happens, we will have an iceberg larger than 2,000 square miles—about the size of Delaware—and this will be such a large iceberg that it will contain roughly 1 trillion tons of ice.

Question No. 4: Global production of what fossil fuel fell by 6.2 percent in 2016? Was it coal or was it oil or was it natural gas?

The answer is A: coal. According to British Petroleum's annual report, global coal production fell by over 6 percent last year—the largest decline since they started keeping statistics in 1950. What is driving the decline? It is shrinking coal production in both the United States and in China.

What is happening in the other two sectors—oil and gas? There was a slight increase in the production of oil last year, and the production of natural gas was basically flat.

Now, compare these to renewable energy, which grew very quickly last year. Global wind energy grew by more than 15 percent in a single year, but that is a small amount compared to global solar energy, which grew by almost 30 percent—in a single year, almost a one-third increase in global production. And renewable energy is now taking up a larger share of the primary energy production worldwide.

Finally question No. 5: How many U.S. cities have joined the ''We Are Still In'' coalition? That is the coalition that was formed after President Trump announced he was going to withdraw the United States from the Paris accord. Is it 15 cities, 125 cities, 500 cities, or just 100 cities?

The correct answer is B, and of course the number is increasing even as we speak. President Trump announced on June 1 that he would pull the United States out of the Paris accord and, in just that short period since—a little over 5 weeks—125 cities, 9 States, 900 businesses and investors, and 183 colleges and universities have declared that they are committed to the vision of the Paris Agreement and to taking steps to be part of obtaining and securing that vision. Together, this coalition represents 120 million Americans and a $6.2 trillion share of the U.S. economy.

It includes cities from the West, like Los Angeles, and the East, such as Baltimore. It includes cities in red States, like Houston, TX, and Tucson, AZ. It includes cities from the Southwest and Southeast, like Santa Fe, NM, from the Southwest, and Charleston, SC, in the Southeast.

These are just a few of the 125 cities—cities led by Democrats and Republicans—because the fact is, the threat of climate disruption to our planet is not a partisan issue. It is not a red issue or a blue issue; it is an issue that impacts everyone on this globe, regardless of political ideology.

So there you have it, folks. Episode No. 2 of the Senate Climate Disruption Quiz—questions ripped right from the headlines. How did you score?

Every week we have surprising new facts—new facts on the ground about the changes in the environment and new facts about the response of communities across the globe.

There is no question that we are racing the clock to take this on as human civilization, and there is no time to spare. So stay engaged in the fight.

In the near future, I will bring you Episode No. 3 of the Senate Climate Disruption Quiz to present some of the new issues that will unfold in the coming days. If you are following this quiz at home and have a good idea for a climate disruption question, please tweet it to me at @SenJeffMerkley on Twitter, using the hash tag ClimateQ4Jeff.

Let's fight together and save our beautiful blue-green planet.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 2:15 P.M. TOMORROW

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:39 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, July 11, 2017, at 2:15 p.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate July 10, 2017:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

NEOMI RAO, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLOOMERS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor bloomers, a full-service floral shop in San Francisco, California, upon their 40th Anniversary.

On July 9, 1977, Patric Powell opened bloomers, which offers artistic arrangements designed with fresh flowers of exceptional quality. bloomers' reputation for excellent service and beautiful arrangements has established an incredibly high standard in the flower community. Patric and the designers at bloomers have decades of experience choosing local flowers and materials to incorporate into their designs.

After many years of cultivating relationships in the business, Patric and his employees have become good friends with their customers and the wider community. Their work has brought delight, happiness and pleasure to many people over the years. Patric also frequently donates flowers, arrangements and gift certificates to local schools, churches and charities.

Making it in the small business universe is a challenge for anyone. Establishing a business that is successful for 40 years is a testament to Patric's business acumen and his wisdom in hiring and retaining talented people. Success only happens when a great boss cares about both his business and the people that work for him. Patric is passionate about his work and is committed and loyal to his employees and customers. His employees praise Patric as the most kind, generous and dedicated person they know.

Mr. Speaker, Patric T. Powell and bloomers has been providing well-designed floral arrangements to his customers in the Bay Area of California for the past 40 years. I am proud of this hardworking man and everyone that has made bloomers a success over the years. It is fitting and proper that we honor them here today.

IN RECOGNITION OF LABOR OF LOVE OUTREACH MINISTRIES FOR ITS 35 YEARS OF SERVICE TO SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Labor of Love Ministries for 35 years of service to the southeast Michigan community and the groundbreaking for its new building in Pittsfield Township. Labor of Love has impacted countless lives through its outreach and religious service locally and internationally.

Originally founded in 1982 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, by a small group of individuals including Pastor Hawthorne and First Lady Hawthorne, Labor of Love Ministries has grown substantially to fulfill its mission of offering religious and education services to the community at large. In addition to holding regular prayer services, Labor of Love provides a variety of additional spiritual, counseling and support services to meet the needs of its congregation. These include training programs for those with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, as well as mission trips overseas for members of the church. Additionally, the church organizes charity drives and volunteer efforts to assist those in need in nearby communities, and these initiatives have helped provide important aid to less fortunate members of the congregation and groups in need. Collectively, these efforts by Pastor Hawthorne and others have helped establish Labor of Love as an effective organization that provides important services and support throughout the community.

Labor of Love Ministries has provided key spiritual guidance and assistance to its congregation and the greater southeast Michigan community. Throughout its 35 years, the church has continued to grow to meet the evolving needs of its members, and its new building will allow it to better serve those in need while fulfilling its mission of spiritual outreach and education. The growth and development of Labor of Love Ministries underscores its effectiveness in serving the community, and it is my hope that the church's new facilities in Pittsfield Township will allow it to strengthen its offerings in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Labor of Love Ministries for 35 years of service and religious guidance. The organization has had a significant impact through its religious and charitable initiatives.

HONORING FRANCISCA ''CISCA'' P. TISHER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Francisca ''Cisca'' P. Tisher upon her retirement as a judge on the Superior Court of Napa County in California. She is retiring after more than 20 years of judicial experience and service and has been an active member of our community for many years during her successful career.

Born in the Netherlands, Judge Tisher emigrated with her family at the age of three. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from the University of California, Davis in 1974. She went on to earn her Juris Doctorate degree in 1980 from the Empire College School of Law in Santa Rosa, California, and was admitted to the California State Bar later that year.

Prior to her appointment as a judge, Judge Tisher specialized in family law. She and her husband Tim have three children, so she worked hard to balance her family life and her career. In 1993, she received the Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award for Napa County.

Judge Tisher was appointed to the Napa County Superior Court by California Governor Pete Wilson in 1995, becoming the first female judge on the court. She served as the presiding judge from 2006 to 2008. Over her 22 years as a judge, Judge Tisher ruled on many cases on a variety of topics. For Judge Tisher, no case was trivial, and every case mattered and was important to the parties involved.

In addition to her work in the judiciary, Judge Tisher has been an active member of the Napa community. She has served on several boards, including the Napa Valley Domestic Violence and Prevention Board and the Napa Valley Activity Center Board. Judge Tisher is a compassionate and determined individual, and she has made a tremendous impact on Napa County.

Mr. Speaker, Francisca ''Cisca'' P. Tisher has led a long career in our community's judicial system. She is an active member of our community. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today and extend our best wishes for an enjoyable retirement.

HONORING THE BIRTHDAY OF HIS HOLINESS THE XIV DALAI LAMA

HON. SALUD O. CARBAJAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the 82nd birthday of His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatsu. Born on July 6th, 1935 to a farming family in Northeastern Tibet, His Holiness was recognized as the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama at the age of two.

Unlike previous Dalai Lamas, His Holiness has visited the west many times to speak with religious and political leaders on the importance of understanding and respect among faiths. His efforts toward peace and universal values of tolerance and compassion earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

My district has had the honor of hosting His Holiness four times to speak at my Alma Mater, the University of California, Santa Barbara. The University has now established a Tibetan Studies endowment in his honor, the XIV Dalai Lama Endowed Chair in Tibetan Buddhism and Cultural Studies.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's commitment to preserving Tibetan culture, and his teachings which promote respect for human rights and non-violent solutions are invaluable lessons for the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join with the global religious community in wishing the XIVth Dalai Lama a very happy birthday.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LORAIN CITY COUNCILMAN EDDIE C. EDWARDS

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to the life of a respected public official and very dear friend, Lorain City Councilman Eddie C. Edwards. He passed away peacefully on June 27, 2017, after courageously battling illness over the last several years. Please let me offer the deepest condolences of our entire citizenry to his son Gregory Edwards, daughter Darnisha Hunter and the countless friends and family whose lives he touched. A true public servant in the every sense, Eddie dedicated his life not only to making government work better for the people he served, but by striving to make the lives of all people, better.

Eddie began his career in politics in 1996, first elected to represent South Lorain's Fifth Ward. Throughout his eighteen years of service on City Council, Eddie fought hard for his community—making his neighborhood safer, parks cleaner, improving education in schools and working toward enhancing and growing small businesses.

While Councilman Edward's service to the City of Lorain will forever be remembered, Eddie's contributions to the Lorain community started decades earlier.

Born and raised in the small town of Dyersberg, Tennessee, Eddie moved to Lorain when he was 20 years old, with less than 13 dollars in his pocket, seeking a better life. He immediately enrolled in school studying business and construction management, which jumpstarted a new life of helping build Lorain forward.

Eddie, who was the owner-operator of Edwards Trucking & Excavating for more than two decades, understood the role small businesses play in driving healthy local economies. Moreover, Eddie knew the value of minority owned small businesses. As a founding member of the Lorain County Minority Contractors Association and Executive Board Member of the Minority Trucking and Transportation Association—Eddie paved the way for countless entrepreneurs to use their skills, grow our local economy and improve our community. His friends, family and colleagues recall his passion and willingness to stand up and speak his mind, always working toward equal rights and fighting for those left behind.

During the rise of the civil rights movement, Eddie was a founding member of the Committee for Positive Change in the Black Community and was the past president of the Lorain NAACP. And as an ordained Baptist Deacon, Eddie was a true champion and relentless advocate for African Americans and all those in need throughout our community.

A man of strong faith, Eddie worked each day fighting for those less fortunate. I myself recall a time when Eddie and I joined the Full Gospel Ministries and Pathways Enrichment Center in Lorain, planting a community garden as part of a community driven effort to produce fresh fruits and vegetables for the local food pantry.

As an African American, there is no question Councilman and businessman Edwards wrote a new chapter in the history of Lorain. As a man and leader in the community, the successes and struggles of Eddie's generous life represent a beacon for generations to follow.

Last year, The Smithsonian opened the only national museum solely dedicated to recording and underscoring African Americans' many contributions in art, history, culture and life. I would like to submit this Congressional Record to the National Museum of African American History and Culture on behalf Eddie's family to hallmark the life and lasting contributions of a true public servant.

Today, my thoughts and prayers are with the entire Edwards family. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in honoring Eddie C. Edwards, a loyal friend, a defender of democracy, a true public servant, a dedicated father, a loving husband and a courageous man.

HONORING CARMELA SANDOVAL AND MARIA SANCHEZ, RECIPIENTS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM AWARD

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor sisters, Ms. Carmela Sandoval and Ms. Maria Sanchez, whom I have selected to receive the American Dream Award for California's 5th Congressional District. This award recognizes the achievements of immigrants in my district who have made remarkable contributions to our communities in the areas of Arts and Culture, Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, or Community Service. Ms. Sandoval and Ms. Sanchez are very deserving of this award and recognition.

Ms. Sandoval and Ms. Sanchez are daughters of Mexican immigrants to the United States. Together they own and manage Bere's Bridal and Christening Wear in Vallejo, California. They are both successful and inspiring community leaders.

Prior to moving to Vallejo, Ms. Sandoval and Ms. Sanchez grew up and attended school in Los Angeles. Though she loved school, Maria had to withdraw to begin working to support her family. Their diligence, perseverance and sacrifice for their family at such a young age embodies the ideals of the American dream and foreshadows their future roles as dedicated community leaders in Vallejo, California.

Carmela and Maria volunteer regularly for Vallejo Together, a nonprofit in our community that provides resources to homeless individuals. They also volunteer for Centro Latino, an organization that advocates for Latino youth in Vallejo. Every year, the sisters organize a holiday ''posada'' for underserved children, which includes a gift drive and a hot meal for all the youth in attendance. While Carmela and Maria are ambitious leaders, they remain humble and willing to lend a helping hand. Both sisters take pride in being loving parents, and, for Maria, being a grandparent as well.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize Ms. Carmela Sandoval and Ms. Maria Sanchez for their achievements and for enriching our community. It is fitting and proper that we honor them here today with the American Dream Award.

TRUMP'S VOTER FRAUD COMMISSION IS A FRAUD AND SHOULD BE DISBANDED NOW

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, unable to cope with the brutal fact that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by 2.9 million votes, the largest vote deficit of any president in American history, Donald Trump tweeted that he would have won the popular vote but for ''millions of people who voted illegally.''

Instead of producing any credible evidence to support this claim, a hoax that has been repeatedly and decisively debunked by experts, the President doubled down and issued an Executive Order establishing the ''Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity'' (PACEI), appointing Kris Kobach, anti-immigration warrior and poster-child for voter fraud conspiratorialists everywhere, to lead the Commission.

It would be more accurate to characterize the PACEI as the ''Presidential Advisory Commission on Voter Suppression.'' Voter suppression is real but the oft-repeated claim that American elections are rife with voter fraud is a myth.

According to a comprehensive 2014 study published in The Washington Post, out of more than a billion votes cast between 2000 and 2014, only 31 credible instances of impersonation fraud were found, and even this tiny number was likely inflated because the study's author counted not just voter fraud prosecutions or convictions but all credible claims. Numerous other reports have reached the same conclusion.

Any lingering doubt regarding the true purpose of the PACEI should be laid to rest by the request made by Commissioner Kobach on June 28, 2017 when he wrote each of the nation's state secretaries of state requesting that they provide the Commission with ''the full first and last names of all registrants, middle names or initials if available, addresses, dates of birth, political party (if recorded in your state), last four digits of social security number if available, voter history (elections voted in) from 2006 onward, active/inactive status, cancelled status, information regarding any felony convictions, information regarding voter registration in another state, information regarding military status, and overseas citizen information.''

The information requested by the Commission will not prevent voter fraud. It will violate rather than protect voter privacy.

And it will make it easier to craft legislation and devise campaign strategies intended to suppress the vote in urban clusters and among targeted demographic groups, particularly minority voters.

It is important that all voters, and the people of the 18th Congressional District of Texas whom I am privileged to represent, be fully protected.

While supplying only public voter information may seem secure, the sad fact is that it is not. There is no publicly accessible database of voter registration information in any of the 50 states or the District of Columbia.

That is because information of this kind is protected from public disclosure under the settled principle of ''collective privacy'' recognized

by the Supreme Court in the landmark decision of *NAACP v. Alabama, 377 U.S. 288, 84 S. Ct. 1302, 12 L. Ed. 2d 325 (1964),* which held that compelled disclosure of affiliation with groups engaged in advocacy may constitute an impermissible chilling effect on the freedom of association guaranteed by the First Amendment, a holding that has been affirmed repeatedly.

Accordingly, neither Texas nor any state can, consistent with the U.S. Constitution, supply the voter information requested by the PACEI.

Indeed, if the information sought was as public in nature as PACEI contends, there simply would be no need for it to request the information from state governments.

Trump's voter suppression commission is a solution in search of a problem.

Contrary to what Trump and Kobach would have the public believe, American elections are not rife with widespread voter fraud. Studies have shown that it is more likely an American ''will be struck by lightning than that he will impersonate another voter at the polls.''

No, the major ill affecting our election system is not that too many people vote due to voter fraud, but that too many people are prevented from voting due to vote suppression schemes such as discriminatory photo identification requirements, curtailment of early voting, too few polling stations leading to long lines and excessive wait times, purging of election rolls.

Even in the wholly unimaginable event that the commission created by Donald Trump and led by Kris Kobach could be trusted enough for states to cooperate by sharing their voter data, there is no reasonable basis for assuming that information would be kept secure and the privacy of voters protected.

Recent cyberattacks have made clear the vulnerability of large central databases to cyberattack. An information security breach at the Department of Veterans Affairs compromised sensitive personal data of 26.5 million persons and cost the VA between $100 million to $500 million to remediate; another occurring at the Office of Personnel Management impacted 22 million current and former federal employees, many of whom held sensitive security clearances; and the attack on Yahoo, the mother of all security breaches, resulted in 1.5 billion user accounts being compromised.

Because large centralized databases are targets of opportunities for criminals, terrorists, and foreign adversaries, it would be the height of recklessness for Texas or any state to provide the PACEI with personal information of millions of persons via unsecured email address to be stored in undersecured databases on undersecured servers.

One of the biggest strengths of the American election system is its decentralized nature.

Aggregating all voter data into one centralized database with questionable security protections makes that data highly vulnerable to a cyberattack that could lead to the personal information of hundreds of millions of Americans being stolen and misused.

Voter privacy and the integrity of the secret ballot are integral to American democracy. Voter privacy rights should and must be protected.

This is especially true since we are now certain that adversaries like Russia are actively involved in cyberwarfare campaigns to undermine our democracy.

There is no denying that our election system is under assault, but not in the way Trump imagines.

Instead of wasting taxpayer money to fund an investigation into voter fraud, which is as mythical as a unicorn, American democracy would be better served by focusing on and correcting the real problem with our elections—voter suppression and external, illegal, and international interference in our national elections.

I am not opposed to employing reasonable, legitimate, and workable means to safeguard the integrity of our electoral system and to protect the precious right to vote. But Trump's Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity is incapable of doing either and thus should be disbanded and dissolved immediately.

HONORING THE HARRIET TUBMAN FREEDOM MUSIC FESTIVAL

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the second annual Harriet Tubman Freedom Music Festival in Auburn, New York.

Auburn is a place that Harriet Tubman once called home, and our community is proud to preserve and highlight her extraordinary life's work. This concert pays tribute to Harriet Tubman's remarkable legacy through music.

The Harriet Tubman Freedom Music Festival's creator, Sean McLeod, is an Auburn native and descendant of a slave rescued by Harriet Tubman. McLeod is a member of the Thompson AME Zion Church and has devoted much of his life to the Harriet Tubman Home, now a National Historic Park. McLeod established the Harriet Tubman Freedom Music Festival to develop both a local and global impact through partnerships with a variety of businesses and nonprofits. McLeod also composed ''A Soundtrack for Harriet Tubman,'' which will be featured at this year's Music Festival.

This celebration is a fitting tribute to a woman who escaped slavery and devoted her life to advancing the freedom and equality of African Americans and the rights of women. I am honored to recognize the Harriet Tubman Freedom Music Festival and I wish it continued success in the years to come.

HONORING AMELIA MORÁN CEJA, RECIPIENT OF THE AMERICAN DREAM AWARD

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Amelia Ceja, whom I have selected to receive the American Dream Award for California's 5th Congressional District. This award recognizes the achievements of immigrants in my district who have made remarkable contributions to our communities in the areas of Arts and Culture, Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, or Community Service. Ms. Ceja is very deserving of this award and recognition.

Ms. Ceja was born in Las Flores, Jalisco, an agricultural village in Mexico, and immigrated to the United States at the age of 12. She is a successful businessperson and an important member of our community.

Ms. Ceja moved with her family to the Napa Valley American Viticulture Area in California as a child. Her parents worked for a local vineyard management company, her father as a mechanic and her mother as a farm worker. She met her husband, Pedro Ceja, while picking grapes with their families. In 1983, the Ceja family came together to purchase 15 acres and to plant their own grapes. The family later founded Ceja Vineyards, Inc. in 1999. Today they own 113 producing acres. Ms. Ceja is the first Mexican American woman to be the president of a California winery. Her vineyard and winery are famous for their quality grape harvests and production of premium Carneros wines.

Ms. Ceja cares deeply about the family business and employees. She is dedicated to producing the highest quality of wine. The California Legislature recognized her contributions to the community on March 15, 2005 by naming her ''Woman of the Year.'' Ms. Ceja's story is one of sacrifice and determination. Stories like hers make America great.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize Ms. Amelia Morán Ceja for her achievements and for enriching our community. It is fitting and proper that we honor her here today with the American Dream Award.

IN RECOGNITION OF REV. JIM HOLLEY FOR HIS CAREER AS A PASTOR AND COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rev. Jim Holley of the Historic Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church. For 45 years, Rev. Holley has been a tireless advocate on behalf of Detroit as a faith leader and community activist.

After receiving theological training at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Rev. Holley began his career as a pastor at the Little Rock Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan. During his time with the church, Rev. Holley has distinguished himself as a key member of the greater Detroit community who understands the spiritual needs and concerns of the city and its residents. His service in church leadership roles, including President of the Council of the Baptist Pastors, speaks to his dedication to the congregation and the well-being of the city at large. Rev. Holley has also been involved in the business community, working with local real estate organizations and founding an advertising agency to empower Detroit's residents and create jobs. In addition to these duties, Rev. Holley also served as the City of Detroit's Director of Community and Civic Affairs during Mayor Duggan's administration, where he was a liaison between the mayor's office and the Detroit community at large.

Rev. Holley has played a critical role in helping to create a vibrant Detroit through his work as a pastor, businessman, and public official. As a result of his work with city leaders and stakeholders, the city has been able to address the needs of its residents through its blight reduction and jobs programs. Additionally, Rev. Holley's deep relationships in the community and firsthand knowledge of Detroit's needs have been key to helping drive action to address issues facing the city. He has been a true leader both in the church and the community, and it is my hope that the City of Detroit continues to build on his work in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Rev. Jim Holley for his outstanding efforts on behalf of Detroit. Rev. Holley has been a dedicated leader in the city while advocating for economic development and empowerment of its residents.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, July 11, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JULY 12

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services.

SD–124

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of David Joel Trachtenberg, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary, Owen West, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary, Ryan McCarthy, of Illinois, to be Under Secretary of the Army, and Charles Douglas Stimson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Navy, all of the Department of Defense.

SD–G50

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Christopher A. Wray, of Georgia, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice.

SD–226

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine nourishing our golden years, focusing on how proper and adequate nutrition promote healthy aging and positive outcomes.

SD–562

9:45 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Business meeting to consider S. 822, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to grants, S. 1447, to reauthorize the diesel emissions reduction program, S. 1359, to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, S. 810, to facilitate construction of a bridge on certain property in Christian County, Missouri, S. 1395, to revise the boundaries of certain John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System units in Delaware, General Services Administration resolutions, and the nominations of Annie Caputo, of Virginia, and David Wright, of South Carolina, each to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Susan Parker Bodine, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the use of the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act and innovative financing in improving infrastructure to enhance safety, mobility, and economic opportunity.

SD–406

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine force multipliers, focusing on how transportation and supply chain stakeholders are combating human trafficking.

SR–253

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider the nomination of Mark Andrew Green, of Wisconsin, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and routine lists in the Foreign Service; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the Taylor Force Act.

SD–419

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine a record six million United States job vacancies, focusing on reasons and remedies.

RHOB–2020

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy

To hold hearings to examine American leadership in the Asia Pacific, focusing on promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

SD–419

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018''.

SD–124

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine S. 943, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an accurate comprehensive student count for the purposes of calculating formula allocations for programs under the Johnson-O'Malley Act, S. 1223, to repeal the Klamath Tribe Judgment Fund Act, and S. 1285, to allow the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians to lease or transfer certain lands.

SD–628

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration

To hold hearings to examine the problem of visa overstays, focusing on a need for better tracking and accountability.

SD–226

JULY 13

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the attempted coup in Montenegro and malign Russian influence in Europe.

SD–G50

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report.

SD–419

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Patrick Pizzella, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, and Marvin Kaplan, of Kansas, and William J. Emanuel, of California, both to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board.

SD–430

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine opportunities in global and local markets, specialty crops, and organics, focusing on perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill.

SR–328A

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the Semi-annual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress.

SD–538

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness

To hold hearings to examine reopening the American frontier, focusing on promoting partnerships between commercial space and the United States government to advance exploration and settlement.

SR–253

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider the nominations of John Kenneth Bush, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, Kevin Christopher Newsom, of Alabama, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, and Damien Michael Schiff, of California, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims.

SD–226

10:15 a.m.
Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Kevin K. McAleenan, of Hawaii, to be Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.
SD–215

10:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018''.
SD–106

2 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Transportation.
SD–192

Select Committee on Intelligence
To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.
SH–219

3:30 p.m.
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
To receive a briefing on energy insecurity in Russia's periphery.
SD–G11

POSTPONEMENTS

JULY 12

10 a.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine managing security sector assistance to support foreign policy.
SD–419

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Résumé of Congressional Activity.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3873–S3888

Measures Introduced: Six bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 1518–1523, and S. Res. 216. **Page S3885**

Measures Reported:

S. 123, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a default configuration that permits users to directly initiate a call to 9–1–1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix. (S. Rept. No. 115–124)

S. 1519, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. (S. Rept. No. 115–125)

S. 1024, 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, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–126) **Pages S3884–85**

Appointments:

Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: The Chair announced, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, pursuant to Public Law 101–509, the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Carol A. Mandel of New York. **Page S3887**

Nye Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of David C. Nye, of Idaho, to be United States District Judge for the District of Idaho. **Page S3880**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By a unanimous vote of 97 yeas (Vote No. 157), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S3879–80**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 2:15 p.m., on Tuesday, July 11, 2017; and that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and Leader remarks count post-cloture on the nomination. **Page S3887**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 54 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. EX. 156), Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget. **Page S3879**

Messages from the House: **Page S3884**

Measures Referred: **Page S3884**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3885–86**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3886–87**

Additional Statements: **Pages S3883–84**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—157) **Pages S3879 and S3879–80**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 3 p.m. and adjourned at 6:39 p.m., until 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, July 11, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3887.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 6 public bills, H.R. 3169–3174 were introduced.

Pages H5390–91

Additional Cosponsors: Page H5391

Report Filed: A report was filed on July 6, 2017 as follows:

H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–200).

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Simpson to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. Page H5389

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rev. Gary Studniewski, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Washington, DC. Page H5389

Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission—Appointment: Read a letter from Representative Pelosi, Minority Leader, in which she appointed the following individuals from private life to serve as Commissioners to the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission: Ms. Nicola Miner of San Francisco, California and Ms. Jennifer Siebel Newsom of San Francisco, California. Page H5389

Quorum Calls—Votes: There were no Yea and Nay votes, and there were no Recorded votes. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D729)*

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. Signed on June 30, 2017. (Public Law 115–43)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Richard V. Spencer, of Wyoming, to be Secretary of the Navy, Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of David Steele Bohigian, of Missouri, to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Ray Washburne, of Texas, to be President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and Kelley Eckels Currie, of Georgia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and to be Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and Jay Patrick Murray, of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, both of the Department of State, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider the nominations of Claire M. Grady, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security, and Henry Kerner, of California, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the nominations of David James Glawe, of Iowa, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, and David P. Pekoske, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of Homeland Security, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, to hold hearings to examine concurrent Congressional and criminal investigations, focusing on lessons from history, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: to hold hearings to examine S. 115, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for an operation on a live donor for purposes of conducting a transplant procedure for a veteran, S. 426, to increase educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training of physician assistants of the Department, to establish pay grades and

require competitive pay for physician assistants of the Department, S. 683, to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities, S. 833, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, S. 946, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to provide treatment court services to justice-involved veterans, S. 1153, to prohibit or suspend certain health care providers from providing non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care services to veterans, S. 1261, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay the reasonable costs of urgent care provided to certain veterans, to establish cost-sharing amounts for veterans receiving care at an emergency room of the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 1266, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 1279, to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs through the use of non-Department health care providers, S. 1325, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the authorities of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire, recruit, and train employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and an original bill entitled, ''The Department of Veterans Affairs Quality Employment Act of 2017'', 2:30 p.m., SR–418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:15 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, markup on the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2018, 7 p.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 2810, the ''National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018''; and H.R. 23, the ''Gaining Responsibility on Water Act of 2017'', 5 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of July 11 through July 14, 2017

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday,* Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of David C. Nye, of Idaho, to be United States District Judge for the District of Idaho, post-cloture.

Upon disposition of the nomination of David C. Nye, of Idaho, to be United States District Judge for the District of Idaho, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of William Francis Hagerty IV, of Tennessee, to be Ambassador to Japan.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: July 13, to hold hearings to examine opportunities in global and local markets, specialty crops, and organics, focusing on perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill, 10 a.m., SR–328A.

Committee on Appropriations: July 12, Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, 9:30 a.m., SD–124.

July 12, Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018'', 2:30 p.m., SD–124.

July 13, Full Committee, business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018'', 10:30 a.m., SD–106.

July 13, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Transportation, 2 p.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: July 11, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Richard V. Spencer, of Wyoming, to be Secretary of the Navy, Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

July 12, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of David Joel Trachtenberg, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary, Owen West, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary, Ryan McCarthy, of Illinois, to be Under Secretary of the Army, and Charles Douglas Stimson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Navy, all of the Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

July 13, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the attempted coup in Montenegro and malign Russian influence in Europe, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: July 13, to hold hearings to examine the Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: July 12, to hold hearings to examine force multipliers, focusing on how transportation and supply chain stakeholders are combating human trafficking, 10 a.m., SR–253.

July 13, Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness, to hold hearings to examine reopening the American frontier, focusing on promoting partnerships between commercial space and the United States government to advance exploration and settlement, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: July 12, business meeting to consider S. 822, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to

grants, S. 1447, to reauthorize the diesel emissions reduction program, S. 1359, to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, S. 810, to facilitate construction of a bridge on certain property in Christian County, Missouri, S. 1395, to revise the boundaries of certain John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System units in Delaware, General Services Administration resolutions, and the nominations of Annie Caputo, of Virginia, and David Wright, of South Carolina, each to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Susan Parker Bodine, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the use of the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act and innovative financing in improving infrastructure to enhance safety, mobility, and economic opportunity, 9:45 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: July 13, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Kevin K. McAleenan, of Hawaii, to be Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, 10:15 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: July 11, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of David Steele Bohigian, of Missouri, to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Ray Washburne, of Texas, to be President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and Kelley Eckels Currie, of Georgia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and to be Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and Jay Patrick Murray, of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, both of the Department of State, 10 a.m., SD–419.

July 12, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nomination of Mark Andrew Green, of Wisconsin, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and routine lists in the Foreign Service; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the Taylor Force Act, 10 a.m., SD–419.

July 12, Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy, to hold hearings to examine American leadership in the Asia Pacific, focusing on promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, 2:15 p.m., SD–419.

July 13, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, 9:30 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: July 13, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Patrick Pizzella, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, and Marvin Kaplan, of Kansas, and William J. Emanuel, of California, both to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board, 9:30 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: July 11, business meeting to consider the nominations of Claire M. Grady, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security, and Henry Kerner, of California, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the nominations of David James Glawe, of Iowa, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, and David P. Pekoske, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of Homeland Security, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: July 12, to hold hearings to examine S. 943, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an accurate comprehensive student count for the purposes of calculating formula allocations for programs under the Johnson-O'Malley Act, S. 1223, to repeal the Klamath Tribe Judgment Fund Act, and S. 1285, to allow the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians to lease or transfer certain lands, 2:30 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on Judiciary: July 11, Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, to hold hearings to examine concurrent Congressional and criminal investigations, focusing on lessons from history, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

July 12, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Christopher A. Wray, of Georgia, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, 9:30 a.m., SD–226.

July 12, Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration, to hold hearings to examine the problem of visa overstays, focusing on a need for better tracking and accountability, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

July 13, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nominations of John Kenneth Bush, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, Kevin Christopher Newsom, of Alabama, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, and Damien Michael Schiff, of California, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: July 11, to hold hearings to examine S. 115, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for an operation on a live donor for purposes of conducting a transplant procedure for a veteran, S. 426, to increase educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training of physician assistants of the Department, to establish pay grades and require competitive pay for physician assistants of the Department, S. 683, to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities, S. 833, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, S. 946, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to provide treatment court services to justice-involved veterans, S. 1153, to prohibit or suspend certain health care providers from providing non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care services to veterans, S. 1261, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay the reasonable costs of urgent care provided to certain veterans, to establish cost-sharing amounts for veterans receiving care at an emergency room of the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 1266, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 1279, to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs through the use of non-Department health care providers, S. 1325, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the authorities of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire, recruit, and train employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and an original bill entitled, ''The Department of Veterans Affairs Quality Employment Act of 2017'', 2:30 p.m., SR–418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: July 11, closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:15 p.m., SH–219.

July 13, Full Committee, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

Special Committee on Aging: July 12, to hold hearings to examine nourishing our golden years, focusing on how proper and adequate nutrition promote healthy aging and positive outcomes, 9:30 a.m., SD–562.

House Committees

Committee on Agriculture, July 12, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Next Farm Bill: Technology and Innovation in Specialty Crops'', 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

July 13, Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, hearing entitled ''The Future of Farming: Technological Innovations, Opportunities, and Challenges for Producers'', 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, July 12, Full Committee, markup on the Agriculture Appropriations Bill, FY 2018; and the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill, FY 2018, 10:30 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

July 12, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, markup on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2018, 3 p.m., 2007 Rayburn.

July 12, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, markup on the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, FY 2018, 4:30 p.m., 2008 Rayburn.

July 13, Full Committee, markup on the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill, FY 2018; the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill, FY 2018; and the Report on the Revised Interim Suballocation of the Budget Allocations, FY 2018, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

July 13, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, markup on the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, FY 2018, 3 p.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

July 13, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, markup on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2018, 4:30 p.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, July 12, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Redefining Joint Employer Standards: Barriers to Job Creation and Entrepreneurship'', 10:15 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

July 13, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, hearing entitled ''Opportunities for State Leadership of Early Childhood Programs'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, July 12, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Combating the Opioid Crisis: Battles in the States'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

July 12, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Examining Medical Product Manufacturer Communications'', 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, July 12, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Semi-Annual Testimony on the Federal Reserve's Supervision and Regulation of the Financial System'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

July 12, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, hearing entitled ''Examining Legislative Proposals to Provide Targeted Regulatory Relief to Community Financial Institutions'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

July 13, Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities, and Investment, hearing entitled ''Impact of the DOL Fiduciary Rule on the Capital Markets'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

July 14, Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities, and Investment, hearing entitled ''A Review of Fixed Income Market Structure'', 9:15 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, July 12, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Beyond Microfinance: Empowering Women in the Developing World'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

July 12, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, hearing entitled ''Advancing U.S. Interests in the Western Hemisphere: The FY 2018 Budget Request'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

July 12, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled ''Black Flags over Mindanao: Terrorism in Southeast Asia'', 2:30 p.m., 2200 Rayburn.

July 13, Subcommittee on Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled ''America's Interests in the Middle East and North Africa: The President's FY 2018 Budget Request'', 1 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

July 14, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''The Tragic Case of Liu Xiaobo'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, July 13, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, hearing entitled ''The Persistent Threat: al Qaeda's Evolution and Resilience'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

July 13, Task Force on Denying Terrorists Entry into the United States, hearing entitled ''The Terrorist Diaspora: After the Fall of the Caliphate'', 2 p.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, July 12, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 469, the ''Sunshine for Regulations and Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2017''; and H.R. 2851, the ''Stop the Importation and Trafficking of Synthetic Analogues Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

July 13, Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, hearing entitled ''The Impact of Bad Patents on American Businesses'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, July 12, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''Evaluating Federal Offshore Oil and Gas Development on the Outer Continental Shelf'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

July 13, Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, hearing entitled ''Comparing 21st Century Trust Land Acquisition with the Intent of the 73rd Congress in Section 5 of the Indian Reorganization Act'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

July 14, Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing on H.R. 873, the ''Global War on Terrorism War Memorial Act''; H.R. 1547, the ''Udall Park Land Exchange Completion Act''; H.R. 2582, the ''Confirming State Land Grants for Education Act''; and H.R. 3115, the ''Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017'', 9 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, July 12, Subcommittee on Government Operations; and Subcommittee on Information Technology, joint hearing entitled ''General Services Administration—Acquisition Oversight and Reform'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, July 12, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 2810, the ''National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018'' {amendment consideration}, 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, July 12, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, hearing entitled ''U.S. Fire Administration and Fire Grant Programs Reauthorization: Examining Effectiveness and Priorities'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, July 12, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Help or Hindrance? A Review of SBA's Office of the Chief Information Officer'', 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

July 13, Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce; and Economic Growth, Tax, and Capital Access, joint hearing entitled ''The Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act: State of Small Business Contracting'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, July 12, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, hearing entitled ''Implementing the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act (FASTA): Maximizing Taxpayer Returns and Reducing Waste in Real Estate'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, July 12, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Care Where It Counts: Assessing VA's Capital Asset Needs'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

July 12, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, markup on H.R. 2006, the ''VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act''; H.R. 2749, the ''Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017''; H.R. 2781, the ''Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act''; and H.R. 3169, the ''VA Acquisition Workforce Improvement and Streamlining Act'', 1 p.m., 334 Cannon.

July 12, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, markup on H.R. 282, the ''Military Residency Choice Act''; H.R. 1690, the ''Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act''; and H.R. 2772, the ''SEA Act'', 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

July 13, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; and Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, joint hearing entitled ''Examining VA's Processing of Gulf War Illness Claims'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

July 13, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Maximizing Access and Resources: An Examination of VA Productivity and Efficiency'', 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, July 13, Subcommittee on Tax Policy, hearing on ''How Tax Reform Will Help America's Small Businesses Grow and Create New Jobs'', 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

July 14, Subcommittee on Social Security, hearing entitled ''Social Security's Solvency Challenge: Status of the Social Security Trust Funds'', 9 a.m., 2020 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, July 13, Full Committee, markup on the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, 9 a.m., HVC–304. This hearing will be closed.

Joint Meetings

Joint Economic Committee: July 12, to hold hearings to examine a record six million United States job vacancies, focusing on reasons and remedies, 10 a.m., 2020 Rayburn.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: July 13, to receive a briefing on energy insecurity in Russia's periphery, 3:30 p.m., SD–G11.

Résumé of Congressional Activity

FIRST SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

The first table gives a comprehensive résumé of all legislative business transacted by the Senate and House. The second table accounts for all nominations submitted to the Senate by the President for Senate confirmation.

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 3 through June 30, 2017

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in session	101	99	..
Time in session	655 hrs., 7′	449 hrs., 3′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	3,867	5,380	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	939	..
Public bills enacted into law	14	29	43
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	..	..	..
Measures passed, total	175	363	538
Senate bills	25	9	..
House bills	15	230	..
Senate joint resolutions	7	5	..
House joint resolutions	14	16	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	4	4	..
House concurrent resolutions	5	9	..
Simple resolutions	105	90	..
Measures reported, total	*162	*196	358
Senate bills	117	..	..
House bills	21	139	..
Senate joint resolutions	1	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	..	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	..	..	..
House concurrent resolutions	..	2	..
Simple resolutions	23	55	..
Special reports	12	2	..
Conference reports	..	..	..
Measures pending on calendar	139	28	..
Measures introduced, total	1,789	3,765	5,554
Bills	1,507	3,161	..
Joint resolutions	46	107	..
Concurrent resolutions	21	68	..
Simple resolutions	215	429	..
Quorum calls	3	1	..
Yea-and-nay votes	155	177	..
Recorded votes	..	166	..
Bills vetoed	..	..	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

*These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 123 written reports have been filed in the Senate, 198 reports have been filed in the House.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 3 through June 30, 2017

Civilian nominations, totaling 242, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	50
Unconfirmed	166
Withdrawn	26
Other Civilian nominations, totaling 710, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	367
Unconfirmed	343
Air Force nominations, totaling 3,078, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	1,832
Unconfirmed	1,246
Army nominations, totaling 3,819, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	3,328
Unconfirmed	491
Navy nominations, totaling 1,622, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	893
Unconfirmed	729
Marine Corps nominations, totaling 1,311, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	1,303
Unconfirmed	8

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	10,782
Total confirmed	7,773
Total unconfirmed	2,983
Total withdrawn	26
Total returned to the White House	0

Next Meeting of the SENATE

2:15 p.m., Tuesday, July 11

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of David C. Nye, of Idaho, to be United States District Judge for the District of Idaho, post-cloture.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

12 noon, Tuesday, July 11

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of the following measures under suspension of the Rules: (1) H.R. 1492—Medical Controlled Substances Transportation Act of 2017; (2) H.R. 702—Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Act of 2017; (3) H.R. 1988—To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1730 18th Street in Bakersfield, California, as the Merle Haggard Post Office Building; (4) H.R. 954—To remove the use restrictions on certain land transferred to Rockingham County, Virginia; (5) H.R. 1397—To authorize, direct, facilitate, and expedite the transfer of administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal land; (6) H.R. 1404—Pascua Yaqui Tribe Land Conveyance Act; (7) H.R. 1541—To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain property related to the Fort Scott National Historic Site in Fort Scott, Kansas; (8) H.R. 1719—John Muir National Historic Site Expansion Act; (9) H.R. 1913—Clear Creek National Recreation Area and Conservation Act; (10) H.R. 1306—Western Oregon Tribal Fairness Act; (11) H.R. 2156—Saint Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Act; and (12) H.R. 597—Lytton Rancheria Homelands Act of 2017.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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