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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 1, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROGER W. MARSHALL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

CONGRATULATING MICHELLE BAUER

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, I congratulated St. Marys Area High School student Michelle Bauer on winning first place in the 34th annual Pennsylvania Municipal League high school essay contest.

Participants were asked to reflect on the theme ''Civics and You'' by writing about opportunities in their community that allow for civic engagement and encourage citizens to volunteer to help with local challenges.

Today, I would like to share a portion of Michelle's essay:

''When I hear the word 'civic,' I think of governmental duties. I understand my duty as an American citizen to vote, obey laws, pay taxes, and serve on juries. These activities all involve one person: yourself. In reality, our civic engagement as Americans expands beyond a single individual and encompasses entire communities. The definition of a civic engagement is an activity that includes both paid and unpaid forms of political activism, environmentalism, and service. As I look at my community, it is apparent that we have a lot of civic engagements.

''As with most towns, mine has a city council that holds meetings and elections for positions on the council. These elections are open to every member of the city and are an excellent way for citizens to have a say in the politics of the town. Just as the elections are open to all citizens so are the weekly meetings. A unique feature about my town's council meetings is that they are televised on a local channel. For individuals who are unable to physically be present at the meeting or have commitments that require attention, this televised version provides a perfect solution to keep abreast of the issues affecting our citizens.

''Along with a local city council, it is also a civic duty of individuals in my community to vote and participate in elections and meetings at the school district level. Anyone is able to run for a position on the school board as well as attend the meetings. For me, our school board is a great way of civic involvement because the board is interested in new opportunities that can be incorporated into the education of our youth. Just recently, I attended a board meeting where the topic of robots was discussed. As a member of a small competition group, we were able to present our success and the benefit of curriculum that includes new technology. One month later, it was announced that a robotics class will be offered in the upcoming school year. This will allow even more students to enhance their education and perhaps encourage new career choices.

''In my community, the civic engagements do not stop on the political level. One of the most prominent forms of civic engagement I see in my community that is not related to politics is the placing of wreaths on the gravestones of fallen soldiers for Memorial Day. Citizens from all over town come together the weekend before Memorial Day and walk through the entire cemetery adorning and honoring the heroes of our country. This event is not for publicity or money but instead is for respecting our veterans. Additionally, it is for the betterment of our community by presenting a beautiful scene to those passing by.''

Michelle goes on to write:

''Onlookers can also be mesmerized by the beauty of the mountainous rural area. Unfortunately, garbage and litter on the side of roads and highways is so commonplace that most individuals do not even do a double-take when they see it. The highway through my town is an area where individuals think it is acceptable to throw garbage out of their vehicles or litter the sides of the road with cigarette butts and wrappers. For the past 7 years, I have been a part of the National Honor Society highway cleanup. Every spring and fall, the society walks the sides of the roads picking up trash and making our town look beautiful.''

Mr. Speaker, this is just a portion of Michelle's essay, and I include in the RECORD the full essay.

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34TH ANNUAL PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST WINNER

1ST PLACE HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY WINNER: MICHELLE BAUER—ST. MARYS AREA HIGH SCHOOL

When I hear the word civic, I think of governmental duties. I understand my duty as an American citizen to vote, obey laws, pay taxes, and serve on juries. These activities all involve one person: yourself. In reality, our civic engagement as Americans expands beyond a single individual and encompasses entire communities. The definition of a civic engagement is an activity that includes both paid and unpaid forms of political activism, environmentalism, and service. As I look at my community, it is apparent that we have a lot of civic engagements.

As with most towns, mine has a city council that holds meetings and elections for positions on the council. These elections are open to every member of the city and are an excellent way for citizens to have a say in the politics of the town. Just as the elections are open to all citizens so are the weekly meetings. A unique feature about my town's council meetings is that they are televised on a local channel. For individuals who are unable to physically be present at the meeting or have commitments that require attention, this televised version provides a perfect solution to keep abreast of the issues affecting our citizens.

Along with a local city council, it is also a civic duty of individuals in my community to vote and participate in elections and meetings at the school district level. Anyone is able to run for a position on the school board as well as attend the meetings. For me, our school board is a great way for civic involvement because the board is interested in new opportunities that can be incorporated into the education of our youth. Just recently, I attended a board meeting where the topic of robots was discussed. As a member of a small competition group, we were able to present our success and the benefit of curriculum that includes new technology. One month later, it was announced that a robotics class will be offered in the upcoming school year. This will allow even more students to enhance their education and perhaps encourage new career choices.

In my community, the civic engagements do not stop on the political level. One of the most prominent forms of civic engagement I see in my community that is not related to politics is the placing of wreaths on the gravestones of fallen soldiers for Memorial Day. Citizens from all over town come together the weekend before Memorial Day and walk through the entire cemetery adorning and honoring the heroes of our country. This event is not for publicity or money but instead is for respecting our veterans. Additionally, it is for the betterment of our community by presenting a beautiful scene to those passing by.

Onlookers can also be mesmerized by the beauty of the mountainous rural area. Unfortunately, garbage and litter on the side of roads and highways is so commonplace that most individuals do not even do a double-take when they see it. The highway through my town is an area where individuals think it is acceptable to throw garbage out of their vehicles or litter the sides of the road with cigarette butts and wrappers. For the past seven years, I have been a part of the National Honor Society highway cleanup. Every spring and fall, the society walks the sides of the roads picking up trash and making our town look beautiful.

Volunteering to pick up the litter is not the only way to carry out civic responsibility. Everybody has either witnessed or directly experienced an accident or fire that required the assistance of a fire department. The fire department is a critical part of a city keeping fires at bay and lending a hand wherever needed. In my community, these people work tirelessly day in and day out for the good of the community. Much of their assistance is not what would be depicted as heroic but rather, responding to flooding issues, weather related emergencies, traffic control, helicopter landing zones, and searching for missing hunters in addition to the rescue and fire calls. They are all volunteers that give up their precious time as a civic duty to their community without expecting recognition. We, the rest of the community, have a duty to help support these people. One of the best ways to do this is to attend their pancake breakfasts that are used as a fundraiser. I am not a huge fan of pancakes and sausage so instead of helping the firefighters out by purchasing a meal, I volunteer to serve the meals to customers. It is the civic duty of individuals in my city to attend this pancake breakfast and show support to the members of this department who tirelessly serve and assist us.

Reporting for standby at a yearly event in July is another aspect of service that our firefighters join their community for. There are loud BOOMS echoing across the city and suddenly bright orbs of colorful lights bursting in the sky. This grand spectacle entrances onlookers for half an hour with its bright lights and fun designs. A Fourth of July fireworks display like this costs money. Every year, our city struggles to come up with the funds needed to purchase fireworks. Businesses around the town make it their civic duty to help by setting out donation cans in their businesses. The local Dairy Queen even has a day where 30% of the profits from every blizzard purchased go to the city fireworks fund. As citizens in the community, it is our duty to go to Dairy Queen on this day and purchase a blizzard as well as make donations in the cans set up at local businesses. Eating ice cream is certainly an enjoyable way to carry out a civic duty. The July show has been an important part of our community for many years thanks to the numerous supporters.

We have many such events traced back in our records. Local history is like the heart of the human body. It shapes us, powers our being, and makes us unique. Without history, individuals would not even be alive. A great example would be the Forty-Second Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment (Bucktails) who were part of the Civil War. These rugged woodsmen were skilled marksmen and ideally suited to the challenges of battle. Stories say that this group was so influential in fighting the war at Gettysburg that the entire outcome could have been different without them. The grit and determination of our local ancestors remains in current day lineage within our community. By knowing local history, members of the community have a sense of pride and can even feel at ease understanding that future generations will uphold the same virtues. My town has a Historical Society that is free to enter and accepts donations of local artifacts and history. As a member of the community, it is my civic engagement to donate any pieces of history I have so that others may benefit from it as well. It is also the duty of our community to visit the Historical Society and learn about our heritage and how we can use the skills of our people to better our society just like the Bucktails did in the Civil War.

Civic engagements are abundant in our community. From the local fireman's pancake breakfast to the city council meetings, civic activities are occurring all around us. It is the obligation of the citizens to engage in these activities to assist with local challenges and create a better community for all of its members.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I will close with her final paragraph:

''Civic engagements are abundant in our community. From the local fireman's pancake breakfast to the city council meetings, civic activities are occurring all around us. It is the obligation of the citizens to engage in these activities to assist with local challenges and create a better community for all of its members.''

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more.

DOWN SYNDROME

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

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee had a most remarkable hearing on Down syndrome, which moved us to a new understanding of this disability.

DS is a genetic disorder that affects over 300,000 men, women, and children in America. It is the most common chromosomal disorder and the most frequent genetic cause of learning disabilities in children.

Each year, approximately 6,000 babies in the United States are born with Down syndrome, a condition resulting from an extra 21st chromosome. Sixty years ago, people with DS had a life expectancy of less than 20 years, and most lived their lives in institutions. Today, due to early medical care and being raised in loving homes, these children can expect to live well into their sixties.

Last week's hearing was one of the most emotionally charged and inspirational hearings I can recall as a member of this subcommittee. The room was filled with children and adults with DS and their families, including my young constituent, Jose Cisneros. Amidst the tears, laughter, and applause, we heard inspiring stories about the amazing accomplishments of DS teens and young adults in sports, scouting, community activism, and film acting.

We learned that they are graduating from high schools, attending colleges, and working at jobs in their communities.

And, most importantly, we saw how these young Americans are teaching our country about the value of diversity and inclusion, while at the same time increasing the happiness quotients of those lucky enough to be in their very wide circle of friends.

We also learned some very surprising and amazing facts about Down syndrome. Researchers told us that individuals with DS are medically very special. On the one hand, they are highly predisposed to autoimmune disorders such as thyroid disease and rheumatoid arthritis; children with DS are 50 times more likely to develop

childhood leukemia, and virtually all adults with DS will develop the brain pathology of Alzheimer's by the age of 40.

But they also said that due to a small difference in their genetic makeup, persons with Down syndrome are naturally protected from heart disease, high blood pressure, and most solid-tissue cancers. Researchers said studying these unique genetics could help discover ways to prevent or cure diseases such as cancer, autoimmune disorders, and Alzheimer's disease.

With such promising potential, one would think the Federal Government would invest heavily in Down syndrome research. Unfortunately, what we learned was that over the last two decades, DS has been one of the least funded genetic conditions at the NIH.

This hearing left no doubt about the need for a significant and sustained investment in Down syndrome research. A trans-NIH DS initiative could help not only find answers and cures for DS, but discover its mysteries, which could answer questions about other serious and life-threatening diseases.

While the benefits of DS research are unquestionable, it will take time to realize its full potential. In the meantime, we must ensure those living with DS can access and afford high-quality, coordinated healthcare and the long-term services and support they need to live productive lives in their communities.

Medicaid long-term supports and Medicaid community-based services gives them that opportunity by enabling them to maintain gainful employment and stay in their homes and in their communities. Sadly, across our country, thousands of people with Down syndrome are on very long waiting lists for those services.

As lawmakers, we have an obligation to find a bipartisan way to protect and expand Medicaid services so all individuals with DS and other debilitating diseases have access to the lifelong interventions and support they need.

The time has come for this country to embrace the gift and potential that Down syndrome brings to our society. The 300,000-plus Americans living with DS today want and deserve the same opportunities available to all of us: to live a full life and to reach their true potential.

CARE FOR UNIVERSITY RAPE VICTIMS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, ever since she was a little girl, Silvana loved to play hockey. In her Massachusetts hometown, hockey was more of a way of life than just a sport.

Her parents knew she was talented, and supported her dream to play even in college. When she was offered a scholarship in 2011, to be the goalie for the University of Connecticut, Silvana felt like all of her dreams had come true, so she eagerly accepted.

She pulled out of her driveway with her packed clothes and hockey gear, but she could have never known that in a few days her life would change forever. She could not have foreseen how a lifetime of hard work and ambition would suddenly disappear tragically.

Like all new students, she was eager to immerse herself in her new college life. On the third day at the university, Silvana went to a house party with some new friends she met. But, after two drinks, she began to feel dizzy, numb, and lethargic. She quickly lost the ability to walk, and she became very ill. As she drifted out of consciousness, a male hockey player at the party instructed others to carry her to his bedroom. When she woke up, she found him on top of her, sexually assaulting her.

She immediately turned to the university for help and reported the assault at The Women's Center. But the counselor did not tell her to call the police, advise her to press charges, or help her in any way.

Silvana then went to the on-campus doctor. But instead of treating her like a victim and offering her the care and support she needed, the doctor told her that he didn't want to know who assaulted her. Get this, Mr. Speaker: the doctor told her, the remedy was for her to transfer to another university. This is awful.

One in five women on our university campuses are sexually assaulted. Of those, less than 25 percent even report the rape.

It took an extraordinary amount of courage for Silvana to report that sexual assault, especially to multiple people she didn't even know. She was offered no help or no support by anyone. She was alone, and she felt it.

The doctor wasn't trained to deal with rape victims and made it clear he wanted nothing more to do with Silvana. The university clearly viewed Silvana as a burden, just another statistic they didn't want to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, universities in the United States should be required to have a victim advocate on staff, a sexual assault victim advocate. Also, to ensure that this doesn't happen to more victims at hospitals, I have introduced legislation that would require a hospital to provide access to a staffer—it is called a SAFE, sexual assault forensic examiner—who is trained to provide care and be sensitive to trauma rape victims, or have a plan to get that victim to a nearby hospital that does. Universities and nearby hospitals need to work together to make sure that rape victims are treated appropriately when they are assaulted on campus.

The bill that I just mentioned is named the Megan Rondini Act. It is in honor of a college sexual assault victim on the University of Alabama campus, who was a Texas student, who was denied access to post-rape treatment at a hospital. The university didn't help her, and the local law enforcement didn't help her.

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In Megan's case, because she was alone and abandoned by all three of those entities, when she returned to Texas, she later committed suicide.

Anyway, after the rape of Silvana, the university left Silvana to pick up the pieces of her shattered life. She was traumatized and depressed. Claiming that she wasn't stable enough, the hockey coach removed her from the team. She never played a single game of hockey in college. She withdrew from the University of Connecticut shortly thereafter, but her rapist stayed on his hockey team and played for the university. Silvana had to successfully sue the university to get justice. She had to take the matter to court, where society and our justice system should have helped her initially.

Mr. Speaker, rape is never the fault of the victim, yet Silvana felt that she was the one being blamed for what happened to her.

We as a society must demand our universities and hospitals protect and care for sexual assault victims. No longer should they be allowed to suffer alone and be abandoned. No more excuses.

And that is just the way it is.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

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

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today under the ''E Pluribus Unum'' to give voice to the elderly, the children, the disabled, the most vulnerable who are once again facing your proposal, Mr. Speaker, to rip healthcare and the safety net from them.

Is this the best you can do, Mr. Speaker, to once again, over and over again, propose this legislation to cut trillions of dollars from Medicaid and Medicare to fund tax cuts for corporations and for billionaires, and to do this, to slam this through the House without transparency?

Mr. Speaker, Republicans like to call me a ''tax and spend liberal,'' but today we see this GOP fiscal plan as another ''borrow and spend to pay for billionaires tax cuts.''

Now, the Wharton School and the Goldman Sachs studies both show that, at best, this plan would produce a paltry one-tenth, maybe two-tenths of 1 percent growth, but we all know that it will increase the national debt by trillions of dollars.

This is a horrible investment, a horrible return, a negative return on investment. It is a terrible process. This is terrible legislation. It will produce terrible results for the overwhelming majority of Americans, especially the millions who rely on Medicaid and Medicare.

Now, here is the deal, Mr. Speaker, that you are trying to push: if Americans are willing to give billionaires

windfall tax cuts today and also trade their health security and safety net, then you, Mr. Speaker, will give average Americans the empty promise of wage growth tomorrow and you will be able to file your taxes on a postcard.

I say ''empty promises'' because studies and our experience have shown that this unicorn of wage growth from tax cuts will never, in fact, happen. It is reminiscent, Mr. Speaker, of the gluttonous Wimpy in the ''Popeye'' cartoon: ''I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.''

Now, this is a great plan if you are rich. It is dollars for fool's gold, but the American people are not fools, Mr. Speaker, and that is why the Republicans want to rush this through with minimum transparency.

This is madness. Trickle down has not worked, it does not work, and it will never work. We have got deficits under Reagan and under George W. Bush to prove it.

The tax cuts will not pay for themselves, Mr. Speaker. The tax cuts won't magically produce increased salaries for workers. The tax plan will not lead to these claims of economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, we have all lived long enough to know that these are all lies. It is not even wishful thinking anymore, because we know better.

Congress should not be considering tax cuts for the rich and opening up even more tax loopholes. Mr. Speaker, we cannot spin gold out of straw, and that is what we have here.

This plan will make most Americans poorer and sicker, if not dead. I urge all my colleagues to reject this bill.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to fortify our election system from Russian further interference; build new infrastructure, that is what creates jobs; fund the Child Health Insurance Program that Republicans let expire; ensure that all 3½ million American citizens in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands can have access to water, power, and healthcare this holiday season. That is what we should be doing.

MINNESOTA'S NEW HALL OF FAMER

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a leader in our community who has received a great honor. Skip Dolan, the head boys basketball coach for the Annandale Cardinals, was inducted into the Minnesota Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in October. I am not going to go through all of his statistics, although they are quite impressive.

I think it is important that we note that a good coach can have a major impact on a kid's life. Coaches don't just teach a game to our kids, they ingrain important life skills in their minds. They teach our kids how to work with others and how to act as a team. They teach our children the value of practice and perseverance, and they teach our kids how to compete with honor, dignity, and how to win with grace.

A good coach guides our kids along the road to success, which is why I am so happy that we have a coach like Skip Dolan in our community. We can never thank him enough for working with and teaching our kids, and we congratulate him on this incredible honor.

A RETIRING PUBLIC SERVANT

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Monticello Public Schools Superintendent Jim Johnson for his work and dedication to Minnesota's children.

After 18 years serving Monticello, 12 of them spent as superintendent, Jim is heading into a well-deserved retirement.

Under Jim's close supervision, schools within his district have produced outstanding test scores, increased graduation rates, and higher enrollment in AP classes. He also played an important role improving his district's athletic facilities.

Not only did Jim help better academics at the schools under his careful watch, he also helped ensure that his district's students had everything they needed to succeed in life.

Jim, we can't thank you enough for the work you have done to educate our kids. Our kids are our future, and because of you, our future is very bright.

THE NEWEST SAUK RAPIDS AMBASSADORS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate three young women in my district who have earned an exciting leadership role in the community.

Bethlehem Kobluk, Brooklyn Harren, and Madeline Bell have all been named 2017 Sauk Rapids Community Ambassadors.

As community ambassadors, Bethlehem, Brooklyn, and Madeline will participate in a 9-week program that will help them develop their leadership skills by participating in activities that engage the community.

The people who end up making the most difference in this world are the ones who show up for others.

We want to congratulate these young women on their new roles and thank them for their interest in making life better for those around them.

Thank you, Bethlehem, Brooklyn, and Madeline, for showing up for Sauk Rapids. I know you all have bright futures ahead, and we look forward to seeing what you will accomplish next.

RUTHIE AND CONNIE LGBT ELDER AMERICANS

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Ruthie and Connie LGBT Elder Americans Act, legislation I am introducing to support our country's LGBT seniors.

The LGBT senior population is growing and is estimated to include nearly 6 million Americans by 2030. Unfortunately, the same generation of LGBT people who fought for rights in the workplace, equal marriage, and societal recognition are once again marginalized as they age.

LGBT seniors have fewer support services, higher poverty rates, more social isolation, and inadequate access to healthcare services compared to the rest of older Americans. One of the primary barriers to providing services to LGBT seniors is a basic lack of information.

The Older Americans Act, or OAA, already requires the Administration on Aging to collect data on the individuals receiving OAA services and the efficacy of OAA programs; but if we collected data on sexual orientation and gender identity, we could better understand this population and provide services that best fit their needs.

Unfortunately, the data we do have shows that the poverty rate is higher for LGBT seniors, which is likely because many have faced discrimination while working, they have historically been unable to legally marry, and they have experienced gender and racial inequalities. We also know that LGBT elders are less likely than their peers to have community support and caretakers to help them.

I know from speaking with LGBT seniors that many fear discrimination when receiving home healthcare services. They are twice as likely to be single and four times more likely to not have children. These are complex and important issues that require a personalized solution.

The bill I am introducing today with Colorado Senator MICHAEL BENNET and Florida Representatives TED DEUTCH and CHARLIE CRIST would help bridge the gap between LGBT seniors and the services they need.

The bill is named for Ruthie Berman and Connie Kurtz, who sued the New York City Board of Education years ago for domestic partner benefits, and won their landmark case in 1994. In the decades since, Ruthie and Connie have continued their advocacy and fight as champions of LGBT rights.

Our bill would amend the Older Americans Act to improve services for LGBT seniors and require data collection on sexual orientation so better decisions can be made.

Additionally, the bill would permanently establish a National Resource Center on LGBT Aging and provide grants for organizations working to improve LGBT services, including access to healthcare and long-term care. The resource centers and the grants will help States and localities reach out to LGBT older adults and provide culturally competent support.

By requiring specific consideration for LGBT seniors in the Older Americans Act, we can provide needed support to a vulnerable yet overlooked population.

I thank my colleagues for their work on this important issue, and I hope many others will join us in supporting this bill to help our LGBT senior communities.

ATLANTIC COAST YOUNG MARINES

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the Atlantic Coast Young Marines and their hard work during Red Ribbon Week.

The Florida regiment of Young Marines has performed more than 50,000 service hours since last October, with more than 35,000 hours of community service dedicated to our veterans.

As you can see, the Atlantic Coast Young Marines and their fellow Young Marines throughout Florida are very active in their local communities.

Reduction of drug demand is a major issue of the Young Marine program, and Red Ribbon Week is an excellent opportunity to recognize the Atlantic Coast Young Marines' emphasis on this mission.

Red Ribbon Week is the oldest drug prevention program in the Nation, reaching millions of Americans during the last week of October each year. By wearing red ribbons and participating in community antidrug events, Young Marines pledge to live a drug-free life and pay tribute to DEA Special Agent Enrique ''Kiki'' Camarena.

Special Agent Camarena was a veteran of the DEA assigned to Guadalajara, Mexico, where he was on the trail of the country's biggest drug traffickers. Because he was so close to unlocking a billion-dollar drug pipeline, he was kidnapped and murdered by drug traffickers. His tragic death opened the eyes of many Americans to the dangerous illicit drug trade.

Red Ribbon Week celebrates Agent Camarena's life and his vision for a drug-free America.

Last week, the Atlantic Coast Young Marines honored his life through events that helped reduce the demand for drugs throughout northeast Florida.

These young men and women who participate in this education and service program are known to be excellent leaders inside and outside of the classroom. The Atlantic Coast Young Marines are a shining example of our First Coast youth.

They also serve our veterans in numerous ways, by cleaning yards, making hospital visits, and simply writing cards. Their dedication to community service and our veterans is a shining example of noble selflessness.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Atlantic Coast Young Marines for their service to Florida's First Coast community.

GUN VIOLENCE IN LAS VEGAS

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we do have a gun violence epidemic in this country, and the time to act is now.

Exactly 1 month ago today, we witnessed one of the most horrific mass shootings in our country's history, and Congress has done nothing. One month later, legislation on bump stocks has stalled. There is a deafening silence from the majority on any responsible actions on this public health crisis, even though, Mr. Speaker, a majority of Americans, including responsible gun owners, support responsible gun safety legislation.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to share a statement written by my constituent Zach Elmore, who is here with us this morning. Zach's sister, Alicia Johnson, was shot in Las Vegas. Thankfully, she survived. This is what he wrote as he sat next to her hospital bed as she recovered:

''My sister was shot in Las Vegas. I have never been more afraid, more angry in my entire life. The problem with shootings around the country is that, unless you know someone directly affected, it is easy to say 'what a tragedy,' and move on with your daily life.

''It is not so easy when you are getting ready for bed and one of your sisters calls inconsolably crying to tell you that another one of your sisters has been shot. It is not so easy when you call your mother and she is terrified and crying and all you can do is try to calm her down while you figure out how to get to your sister as quickly as possible. It is not so easy to see your brother-in-law with blood still on his hands from doing whatever he could to keep your sister alive. It is not so easy to see your sister in a hospital bed, unable to move due to a gunshot wound in her back and staples in her stomach from surgery to check for organ damage. We are among the luckiest ones.

''I am sick and tired of thoughts and prayers. If thoughts and prayers had any affect whatsoever, there would be a lot of people still alive today. All these thoughts and prayers would have miraculously pulled bullets out of victims and healed wounds, would have stopped these massacres before they started.

''You know what is better than thoughts and prayers and lines around the block at blood banks and enormous relief funds for victims of tragedy? Creating a society where we don't have to do these things many times a year.

''We waited so long to do anything after Columbine that Virginia Tech happened. We still couldn't talk about it when the Aurora theater shooting happened. That didn't change anything, and then 20 children were murdered at Sandy Hook. Even that wasn't enough to promote change. When Dylann Roof happened, still couldn't talk about it, and then San Bernardino happened. We still couldn't bring ourselves to discuss gun control, and then the Pulse nightclub shooting happened.

''Lord knows we can't do anything about guns, and then Las Vegas happened. And we are still being told that now is not the time, let healing begin, don't politicize tragedy, but by all means send thoughts and prayers to all affected by 'insert massacre here.'

''There is no place in society for any weapon which has the singular purpose to kill people. The man who killed and injured more than any massacre in America's history broke the mold for who commits mass shootings. He would have easily passed a background check and psych evaluation. He was affluent and had no known ties to terrorist organizations, but he is certainly a terrorist. The system we have in place allowed him to accumulate dozens of assault weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition because, for all intents and purposes, he was not a risk to society.

''Let's keep in mind, the Second Amendment of the Constitution was written over 200 years ago when a good gunman might get three shots off a minute with a musket. It is hard for me to believe the Founding Fathers envisioned a world where one man could or would fire 400 rounds a minute into a crowd of people.

''This should not be difficult. How many people have to die before people will apply a little logic to gun laws? Do more children need to die? Does a hospital need to be attacked? What is your limit? Does it have to happen to you or a loved one before you start to think differently about gun laws?

''The people of this country have so much power. We have protested, pressured our Congressmen and -women, and we have seen that work. Why can't we do the same to reduce and hopefully eliminate the insane amount of gun violence in America?

''Excuse me for not being willing to wait to let healing begin, for not accepting that now is not the time to talk about a major problem in this country. There is never a wrong time to stand up for what you think is right.

''My sister was shot in Las Vegas in the latest of a devastatingly long line of mass shootings in this country. We are luckier than 58 people and their families, and likely luckier than many of the over 500 other people who were injured. If I don't talk about it, if we don't truly take steps to effect positive change, everyone reading this will forget it happened because they will be sending thoughts and prayers to the victims of the next mass shooting in America.''

Mr. Speaker, that is the end of the excerpt of his letter. Zach's family's experience illustrates why it is crucial for us to take a hard look at gun violence policies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will, across the aisle, in a bipartisan fashion, do what is right for the American

people and protect families like Zach's across the country.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA HAS A HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS

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

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the Government of Ethiopia's continued pattern of repression and violence against its own people, and I urge the House of Representatives to vote on H. Res. 128, the Supporting Respect for Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia resolution.

This resolution calls on the Government of Ethiopia to take clear, decisive steps towards becoming more inclusive, more democratic, and more respectful of the basic human rights of its own people.

This resolution has overwhelming bipartisan support, with more than 70 cosponsors, and it passed out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously on July 27.

The ongoing human rights crisis in Ethiopia is extremely troubling to me, to the resolution's other cosponsors, the many Americans of Ethiopian heritage, and too numerous to list human rights groups. I firmly believe that the passage of this resolution will encourage the Ethiopian Government to end its practice of violence and repression and provide a strong basis for an inclusive government.

Specifically, this resolution condemns the excessive use of force by Ethiopian security forces and the killing of peaceful protestors; the arrests and detention of journalists, students, activists, and political leaders; and the Ethiopian Government's abuse of the anti-terrorism proclamation to stifle political and civil dissent.

The resolution does not simply highlight the Ethiopian Government's increasingly authoritarian acts, but it also encourages the United States to support efforts to improve democracy and governance in Ethiopia.

I believe that the United States can take actions that will positively influence the Ethiopian Government and use our existing institutions to further democracy and effective governance in Ethiopia.

Critically, the resolution calls on the Ethiopian Government to admit U.N. human rights observers so they can conduct an independent and thorough examination of the current state of human rights in Ethiopia.

On March 9 of this year, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing to discuss specific steps the United States can take to bring about positive changes for the Ethiopian Government and their people.

Among those who testified was Deacon Yoseph Tafari of the St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox Church located in Aurora, Colorado. Deacon Yoseph was raised in Ethiopia and has experienced the daily struggles too many Ethiopians have faced living in abject poverty under an oppressive government.

Deacon Yoseph fled from Ethiopia in 1976 and came to the United States as a refugee. He and many of the members of the Ethiopian community in my congressional district of Colorado, including the Oromo and Amharas, have worked diligently to organize and assist those still suffering from repression in their home country.

Oromo community president of Colorado, Jamal Said, has also shared his concerns with me, and both of these gentlemen have no motives other than a concern about the safety and state of democracy in Ethiopia. I appreciate their leadership in the community as they continue to fight for democracy in their homeland.

Unfortunately, stories like this are not uncommon in my district, and I am disappointed that the House has not yet scheduled a floor vote on H. Res. 128. I note that on two prior occasions a vote was tentatively scheduled. In both of these instances, it is my understanding that the vote was postponed due to pressure from the Ethiopian Government, which continues to make promises to curb human rights abuses against their own people, but fail to deliver.

Additionally, it has been brought to my attention that the Ethiopian Government has threatened to cut off security cooperation with United States should we proceed with H. Res. 128.

I am particularly dismayed that rather than solving their problems and moving towards becoming a more democratic country, the Ethiopian Government has chosen instead to hire a D.C. lobbying firm at a cost of $150,000 a month to ''work with the Ethiopian Government to develop and execute a public affairs plan to enhance the dialogue and relationships with policymakers, media, opinion leaders, and business leaders,'' in addition to ''meetings with Members of Congress, their staffs, and executive branch officials.''

The issue the Ethiopian Government needs to address is the repression of democracy and its citizens in Ethiopia. The solution to whatever negative perception it has in the Halls of the U.S. Congress is not a public affairs one, but, rather, what concrete steps are being taken against democracy in Ethiopia.

That is why I remain committed to working with House leadership to have a vote scheduled on H. Res. 128.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage leadership to schedule a vote, and I call on my colleagues to vote in favor of and pass H. Res. 128. I will continue working with local Ethiopian community leaders in Colorado and across the country to raise awareness of the human rights abuses occurring in Ethiopia and to bring relief from oppression to the Ethiopian people.

UNDERSTANDING THE RYAN-MCCONNELL TAX GIVEAWAYS

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and an honor to represent the community of the San Fernando Valley here in the United States Congress. I think it is my duty and responsibility to make sure that when something is going on in Washington, people should know what is going to happen to them and how it affects them.

I think it is really important for everybody to understand that right now in the workings—and it is probably going to come to this floor in just a few days—is the Speaker Ryan-McConnell tax giveaways to big corporations, which will actually increase taxes for working families, working mothers and fathers.

I think it is important for people to understand that this is something that is being sold as a middle-income tax cut. Actually, what it is going to do is it is going to cut the take-home income to middle class families.

What it is going to mean is if you are a police officer or a teacher or a waitress, you are going to see less money every week. It might be $5 less a week, it might be $50 less a week, it might be $100.

Let me tell you, the opposite of what is going to happen should this become law is that the biggest corporations in America are going to see $1 million less in taxes a week, maybe $50 million less in taxes paid a week, maybe $100 million less per week paid in taxes.

Some people are thinking: Well, they earned it. They should keep it.

Well, okay. I understand what you are saying. But, see, this is the fundamental problem of this $1.5 trillion reduction in the ability for our Federal Government to fund things like Medicaid and Medicare. Because when we see less money, you are going to see Members on this floor and in committees throughout this House and in the United States Senate saying: Well, we don't have the money.

When they see a mother whose child has cerebral palsy and she is saying, ''I go to work every single day, and thank you, government, for allowing my child to be in a program so that he or she can be safe while I go to work,'' they are going to say, ''You know what? I agree with you, ma'am. We should fund that, but since we don't have the money anymore, we are going to stop funding that.''

This is a woman who just wants to work for a living. This is a person who just wants to make sure that she can have the dignity of work and have her child in a safe place, but we are going to cut those programs if we have this tax giveaway go through Congress and signed by this President.

□ 1045

You see, it is a multistep process. And what some of my colleagues—and

so far, the only ones voting for this tax giveaway are my Republican colleagues. I say that accurately, not to be partisan, but just to be honest and accurate. They say we have to do this; it is going to stimulate the economy.

Well, also, in this package, this plan that they want to make into a law, basically what it will do, it will actually incentivize the biggest corporations in America, American corporations. It is going to incentivize them to go ahead and close up shop in your neighborhood and go set up shop somewhere else in the world.

And the only connection they are going to have with you, ladies and gentlemen, is they are going to want to sell those products to you, built by other than American hands in other parts of the world. The only other connection they are going to have is this: They are going to be able to bring their money, their profits, back to the United States, pretty much free and clear, and just count their money here, where they call themselves an American corporation.

I think it is important, ladies and gentlemen, that we recognize that this is something that is wrong. This is something that is going to hurt the middle class. This is something, again, if you are a teacher, if you are a police officer, if you are busdriver, this is going to hurt you.

If you are a single mother who is working every single day, proud to do that, you are going to see that you are not going to have the support you need to make sure that that childcare continues for your child.

If you are a family member that has a mother or father whose only income is Social Security, they probably depend on Meals on Wheels. They probably depend on programs like that. Some of that comes from your Federal Government. But when these Republican colleagues cut $1.5 trillion out of the United States budget, it is going to come out of you, ladies and gentlemen. The people who have worked hard, seniors who are finally retired and should have the dignity of having a dignified life and having at least one darned meal a day, that is where it is going to come out of.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am here to warn you, please call your Members of Congress. Please make sure that you let them know: I don't want that kind of giveaway.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON OUR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEM

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I have a map beside me. It is not a Verizon or an AT&T map showing its coverage. What this is is a snapshot, a moment in time, of the number of airplanes in the United States' airspace at any moment, over 90,000 flights a day. Think about that. That is over 200,000 takeoffs and landings.

We, in the United States, have the safest and the busiest airspace in the world; yet there are some in Congress who want to privatize this to a board made up of 13 members only. I personally think it is more of a monopolization, not a privatization of our airspace.

This is the taxpayers' airspace. This is not the airspace that we should be giving away to a 13-member board, or the control of.

Those who want to pass this AIRR Act, H.R. 2997, want us to compare it to Canada. Well, I have flown in Canada. Look at the map: below the line in the United States, above the line in Canada. It is not even apples to apples. It is not apples to oranges. It is apples to elephants.

And you say, well, that makes no sense. No, it doesn't. It does not make any sense to give control of this airspace, where our wonderful men in uniform and women who fly the military aircraft, the pilots like myself, but, more importantly, the carriers that carry all of us to here and there, the ability to control this airspace.

I am a small-government guy, Mr. Speaker, but there are three instances where government needs to be involved in the lives of our citizens: national defense, national intelligence, and national airspace.

I would argue that I have probably been in more control towers than any Member of Congress, and when you walk in, there are wonderful controllers who are looking at modern equipment, computer screens, display lights, who are moving aircraft here and there, very efficiently, very professionally.

There are those who have stood at this podium, Mr. Speaker, and held up pieces of paper like this and have scared our people into saying: Oh, this is the way controllers transfer control of airplanes from airspace to airspace.

That is a gross mischaracterization of what is happening. They use this as a backup if a grid goes down, but they don't use it to move traffic. They use modern computers.

The NextGen, or what we call the next generation of modernization of FAA, is called ADS-B, Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast. It allows separation of aircraft to come down. It has saved billions—that is with a B—in fuel and other costs, and yet we want to give all this modern equipment to the control of a 13-member board? I think not.

We have all had delays in airports. Most of them, I will tell you, are weather. But how many of us have pulled up in a plane and we are waiting for another plane to back out of a gate? That is not an air traffic control issue. That is an issue with controlling the gates at the airport, and that goes back to the airlines.

How many of us have been delayed because they come on and when we are just fixing to board the plane, oh, you have a maintenance issue, or we are waiting for another pilot crew to get off one aircraft to pilot your aircraft? Again, those who would want to pass this act would make you believe that that is air traffic control's fault. No, it does not have to do with air traffic control.

CBO has said that if we give this airspace control to a 13-member private board, it will cause a $100 billion deficit addition—$100 billion. The Congressional Review Service has said that if we do that, that automatically allows sequester to take place. We don't need that. We are trying to get out of that now. Our wonderful men and women in uniform are having a hard enough time meeting quotas, meeting equipment, meeting training, everything, because of the sequester.

This would hurt military retirement funding. This would hurt our Border Patrol, men and women there protecting us from terrorist activity on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, we need modernization, but we don't need privatization. It is a bad idea any way you look at it.

We do need to pass a long-term FAA reauthorization act. I am all for that. Our FAA needs to have the stability of funding where they can look down the road more than 6 months at a time and plan for what is coming down and what they need to do to keep our airspace safe.

So, Mr. Speaker, we don't need this H.R. 2997 passed. We need just to fund FAA for a long time.

TAKING A KNEE FOR WHAT IS RIGHT

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate this morning to rise to share my passion and my love for this country, but also my frustration. I will use this graphic to set the tone for my remarks this morning.

Although the Republican tax proposal will be introduced tomorrow, I believe, if you look at this graphic and the headlines, it says that 80 percent of the tax relief will not go to you and you and you and to the American people, or maybe even staff and Members who are here who are Americans, salaried individuals; it will go, 80 percent, to the 1 percent of Americans.

Now, I am not going to talk about the tax legislation this morning. I want this to be a symbol of the wrongness of the direction of this country and the leader who leads this Nation. We are going down a wrong path.

Many of us thought we had come together in unity, we had overcome the divisiveness because we were different,

we had recognized the beauty of all of us, rural citizens in West Virginia, Ohioans in the mountains of the Appalachian area, Midwesterners, Southerners, Northerners, Westerners, Far West, immigrant and nonimmigrant. But, unfortunately, in 2016, although some lost and some won, as we moved toward a new administration with the hopes and dreams of those who had voted, we looked for the unifying of what I know that all Presidents have done.

It has been a privilege of mine to work with President William Jefferson Clinton, who didn't have an easy time but sought to unify the country. I worked with President George W. Bush, who did not have an easy time or an unconflicted election but sought to unify the country, in fact, was an enthusiastic signer of the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act; and President Barack Obama, who rode in on a sense of hope and unity. That is the task of a President.

In the midst of this, again, having been appointed to the Homeland Security Committee in the ashes of 9/11, having gone to Ground Zero while our brave first responders were recovering, were still looking for remains—it will penetrate my soul forever—unity was what we sought in spite of our difference of opinions.

So I rise to thank the first responders and the quick response of the NYPD and Fire Department on yesterday's terrorist act. Yes, it was a terrorist act. We live in a different world. But rather than rise to the occasion, this morning the words come from the White House:

> The terrorist came into our country through what is called the ''Diversity Visa Lottery Program,'' a Chuck Schumer beauty. I want merit-based immigration.

You tell me how many immigrants, how many Italians, how many Irish, and how many of those who escaped the Holocaust, who came before that from the Jewish community, how many of them would have met any test of merit. Did the slaves who were brought here as slaves meet a test of merit? All of these individuals helped build this Nation.

And on the morning when people are mourning of their lost loved ones, rather than bringing the country together, there is a politicizing, calling out names of Members. We are working on merit based.

Does he even understand what merit based is? Absolutely not.

Taking away from the conspiracy charge against Manafort, taking away from the conspicuous collusion with Russians that George Papadopoulos has indicated, oh, he is worrying about him lying. But I am worrying about him telling the truth, and he is. They wanted dirty stuff on the opponent; they wanted to work with Russia; they wanted to work with Putin; and they wanted to conspire against the United States of America—as well as the misunderstanding or the devastating comments of his chief of staff about the civil war and NFL players being called inmates in a prison.

Mr. Speaker, I am fed up with dividing this Nation. We are going in the wrong direction, and I am not going to accept it. I am taking a knee with all of those who believe in justice and what is right. I did it before. I do it now. I take a knee.

□ 1100

PROTECT RURAL AMERICA HOSPITALS

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

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, if the United States is going to maintain the ability to feed and clothe our own people and fuel this American economy, we need a strong and sustainable rural America like the district I represent in west Texas.

What would this country be without the hardworking energy and agriculture producers in small towns across this great land? The heart of small-town sustainability is access to healthcare. There are over 5,000 hospitals in the United States, and roughly half of them are in rural America, serving one out of every five Americans. Without access to basic medical services, communities in America's breadbasket and energy basin would not survive.

Hospitals serving rural communities face unique challenges: an aging population, low patient volume, higher percentages of Medicare beneficiaries, to name a few. Each translates into a higher per-patient cost which has left 41 percent of rural hospitals operating at a loss.

On top of this problematic patient volume and patient mix, ObamaCare has heaped a backbreaking $54 billion in additional regulatory burden in unfunded mandates. Since 2010, the year ObamaCare was enacted, 80 rural hospitals have shut down, 11 of which were in my home State of Texas. If this rate continues, in less than 10 years, an unimaginable 25 percent of our Nation's rural hospitals will close. That would cripple rural communities across this country and deliver a devastating blow to our agriculture and energy economy, affecting all Americans, including our neighbors in urban and suburban America.

For some Texans, the nearest hospital is already 100 miles away. In an emergency, this distance can mean the difference between life and death. Point of fact: 60 percent of all trauma deaths occur in rural America, despite the fact that rural America only makes up 20 percent of the country's population.

Here is a startling fact and outright scary scenario: one-third of rural hospitals have been deemed vulnerable to closure. If all 673 of those hospitals were to close down, it could result in over 130,000 jobs lost and almost $300 billion in GDP lost. When unemployment goes down and wages go down in those small towns, folks move away in search of better opportunities.

In order to sustain the critical lifeline hospitals provide for our rural communities, I have introduced H.R. 4178, the Healthcare Enhancement for America's Rural Towns Act, or the HEART Act. Why? Because small towns are the heartbeat of America; the heart of our food, fuel, and fiber production; the heart of traditional American values. This legislation extends two programs vital to the sustainability of rural hospitals and the community they deserve: the Low-Volume Adjustment program and the Medicare-Dependent Hospital program. These programs account for less than one-tenth of 1 percent of all Medicare expenditures, but they go a long way to ensuring that rural community hospitals with a higher percentage of Medicare patients have adequate funding to serve the unique populations.

By extending the Medicare Low-Volume Adjustment program for 2 years, and for the first time permanently extending the Medicare-Dependent Hospital program, we can provide the assurance and continuity that our rural hospitals desperately need in order to serve our communities in the future. Just as importantly, we do this in a way that is budget neutral and without spending any additional taxpayer moneys.

Let's pass this legislation. Let's protect the heart of rural America and give our community hospitals the certainty that they need to keep our people and our communities healthy.

AMERICANS BEWARE OF TAX BILL

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about a job-killer tax bill that is coming to Congress this week, and if you don't watch out, it could be coming to your hometown soon.

Up until yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I thought the new GOP tax plan was just run-of-the-mill, upside-down class warfare waged by the wealthiest people in the country against everybody else. I knew 80 percent of the windfall of the tax cut would go to people making $912,000 a year or more—the richest 1 percent of the country. I knew it would repeal the alternative minimum tax, the only reason that Donald Trump paid any taxes at all in the 1 year we know he paid taxes over the last few decades in 2005. I knew it would repeal the State and local income tax deduction, which would be terrible news for tens of millions of middle class people in States across the country, including mine in Maryland.

I knew it would repeal the estate tax which only affects the wealthiest one-half of 1 percent of the country. All of these provisions would help to create a

hereditary oligarchical elite like the hereditary oligarchical elite in Russia today.

This huge penthouse suite party will be paid for by the rest of us and blow a record-smashing $2 trillion deficit hole into our economy and programs like Medicare and Medicaid. I knew all of this. It is predictable enough.

But then I noticed a provision yesterday that is absolutely gobstopping, shocking, startling, eye-popping, unbelievable in the GOP tax blueprint. It is called the territorial system, and what it means is simple. We will tax American businesses only when their operations are here in America. Here is what that means: if I am a businessman and I am going to set up a manufacturing plant on main street in my hometown, I have to pay the full freight of taxes. I pay everything.

If I set my business, my new manufacturing plant, up in Mexico, or Bangladesh, or Ireland, I pay zero taxes. Let me repeat that: if I decide to set up my business in America, I pay 100 percent of the taxes I am going to owe. If I decide to relocate my business and all of the jobs abroad, I will pay zero taxes. That works even if I have already got the business in place here and I decide to ship everything overseas. Suddenly, I get a 100 percent tax break for all the profits that I earn overseas.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I misunderstand it. I am not a professor of tax law. I am a professor of constitutional law. So maybe I am not interpreting it right. I would love nothing more than for one of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle to get up and tell me it is not true, and correct me, and explain what I have got wrong.

But if I have got it right, this shocking provision tucked into the bill that we are about to see is a job killer, a national emergency, and a dagger pointed at the heart of the American economy and our jobs. It is only a few, small, big businesses, a few big businesses that will benefit.

Small businesses are not going to be benefited at all. The small businesses do not set up tax-dodging corporate subsidiaries in the Cayman Islands, or the Bahamas, or in Ireland. They don't ship overseas. So this is for a tiny percentage of the largest corporations in America, leaving the small businesses behind and taking millions of American jobs with them.

Why would the majority do this to us when Donald Trump campaigned on a platform of putting America first and promising to bring American jobs back home—not export millions more with a devastating tax plan?

Now I see why they are hurdling this through Congress. In 1986, with the tax reform plan, there were 63 days of hearings, and more than 450 witnesses in Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committee. It took 2 years and 10 months. This plan they want to slam through Congress in less than 2 weeks, with barely any witnesses, maybe no hearings, maybe one or two hearings; and you know why? Because they are tucking the most massive job-killing provision anyone has ever seen into this bill.

If anything, we should be imposing higher taxes on those businesses that ship our jobs overseas—not lower taxes—or they should pay the same. But this plan would wipe out any taxes at all, and it is dumbfounding that they would think this is something that Congress would put up with—just like they tried to slam through Congress the ACA repeal and we stopped it when people got the word.

We have got to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that every American understands what is really in this tax bill coming our way.

HIGHLIGHTING THE STEP FORWARD TO CURE TSC MIAMI WALK

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to highlight the Step Forward to Cure TSC Miami Walk, which took place last weekend at my alma mater, Florida International University. Tuberous sclerosis complex, or TSC, is a rare genetic disease that causes uncontrollable tumor growth across the face, body, and organs of impacted individuals.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for TSC. South Florida's own hero, Max Lucca, pictured here, was diagnosed with TSC when he was only 2 weeks old. Now, he is 9 years old, and he has thrived because of the constant love and care provided by his parents, Vanessa and Max. The TSC Miami Walk brings together patients like Max Lucca and their families with supporters who are committed to improving their lives.

Every year, the walk plays an essential role in advancing lifesaving research and programs to increase awareness of TSC, and expanding the network of resources that improve the lives of patients and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the work of Vanessa Vazquez; her husband, Max; and all of the other activists who are so needed from the Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance who work so hard to make this walk a reality.

I want to thank everyone who came out to FIU last Saturday and made this event a resounding success. Due to your efforts, due to your commitment, I am confident that we will be able to increase the research and education needed to find a cure for this tragic disease.

Meanwhile, go Max Lucca.

COMMIT TO ENDING PEDIATRIC HIV/AIDS WORLDWIDE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues to support H. Res. 593, a bipartisan resolution reaffirming our national commitment to ending pediatric HIV/AIDS worldwide.

It is a resolution that I introduced with my friend, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE. The fight against pediatric AIDS is a great example of how our country is a positive and transformative force in the lives of many across the world. Because of our leadership here in the United States over the past 12 years, there has been a 62 percent increase in the number of women receiving mother-to-child transmissions prevention services. Wow.

Thanks to positive American involvement through programs like PEPFAR, more than 11.5 million expectant mothers around the world have received HIV testing and counseling, and nearly 2 million babies have been born HIV-free.

However, even though we have made great strides in a fight against pediatric AIDS over the last few years, we cannot rest, Mr. Speaker. We cannot rest while more than 400 children around the world are born with HIV every day; 400. We cannot rest when less than half of the children suffering from HIV have access to the lifesaving treatments they so desperately need; less than half. Indeed, we must redouble our efforts to reach every single mother and child impacted by this terrible disease.

For this reason, my friend, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, and I just reintroduced H. Res. 593, a bipartisan resolution recommitting our country, the United States, to eradicating pediatric AIDS worldwide and supporting those who have been impacted by this epidemic. Our resolution also supports our national efforts to provide women and children with HIV counseling, with HIV testing services, as well as expanding their access to lifesaving treatments.

America's ongoing commitment has helped save the lives of many, but so much more remains to be done. We are one of the greatest hopes for a better future for countless others. Now, more than ever, it is essential to ensure that we remain committed as a nation to creating a future where no child suffers from HIV/AIDS.

I urge my colleagues to support this worthwhile cause and cosponsor our resolution, H. Res. 593.

SIGN UP FOR HEALTHCARE NOW

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today is the last day of baseball, but, more importantly, it is the first day of open enrollment for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

This year, enrollment only runs from November 1, today, through December 15. This is half the length of last year when open enrollment extended until January 30. It is 6 weeks shorter, so to sign up, get started today. You only have 45 days to do it. This is something the Trump administration is doing to

make it more difficult and less likely people will sign up.

Don't let them do this. Sign up for your healthcare. During this shortened enrollment period, there will also be 12-hour periods of scheduled maintenance when the website will be inaccessible. These periods will occur every Sunday morning, except one, during the open enrollment period. December 15 is the last chance for individuals to sign up for health insurance for 2018, unless you have a major event like getting married, having a child, or moving.

In previous years, individuals were notified of autoenrollment with time to change their choice. This year, that happens on December 16, a day after open enrollment ends, so there is no reason to do it. It just tells you what you have got, and you don't have the opportunity to change. So individuals should not rely on autoenrollment. They should use healthcare.gov to find the best plan for them and their families.

In many cases, there are affordable plans. In 2018, in Tennessee, 88 percent can find a bronze plan for under $75.

□ 1115

In Memphis, many consumers earning $30,000 to $48,000 a year can find silver plans for under $100. This is particularly true for those in their late forties to age 64.

You may qualify for premiums and cost-sharing reductions like in past years. In 2016, 88 percent of Tennesseans on the exchanges received premium assistance, and 58 percent received cost-sharing reduction subsidies.

This is still true even as the President attempts to sabotage the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Marketing funding and funds for navigators to help people through the process have both been slashed. In spite of that fact, we are going to try to find some navigators still around and have a townhall in Memphis possibly Saturday, November 11. We are still in the process of scheduling that, but we want all of our people to get that chance. So we encourage all Americans to get that chance.

Cost-sharing reduction subsidies will be available for individuals who qualify for silver plans despite Trump's decision to stop the government from reimbursing insurers.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. All current efforts to repeal and replace have failed because they have not come up with a better plan. Healthcare is difficult, and we came up with a plan that needs some tweaking but not repealing.

Memphis has recently seen a decrease in the disparity of breast cancer mortality rates between Black and White women, a clear indication that access to affordable care saves lives.

Memphis has done excellent work at expanding access to screenings and coverage. In addition to local efforts, the Affordable Care Act has helped to reduce or even eliminate copayments that women have to pay for preventive screenings, including mammograms.

Access to affordable healthcare has saved lives in Memphis and throughout this country. The open enrollment for the Affordable Care Act starts today and runs through December 15. Avail yourselves of those opportunities.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 16 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Michael W. Waters, Joy Tabernacle AME Church, Dallas, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Immutable God, greater than all that has or ever will be conceived, hear our prayer:

For ancestors at rest in the abode of angels, accosted and assaulted while present upon these shores, enduring avalanches of animus never atoned; for babies bombarded by bombs, bounties placed upon their beautiful heads at birth; for the cacophony of cries citing crimes against humanity, callous cycles of crisis, casualties colored in chalk.

In Your name, we shall resist evil by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Grant that we become drum majors of justice, promulgators of peace, architects of an America freed from greed, hate, oppression, racism, suppression, indeed, the very threat of tyranny, replete with liberty and justice for all, till that great day when lions shall lie down with lambs and we study war no more, when justice flows like waters, and righteousness, like a mighty stream, and all God's children are finally free.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. ROSKAM led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. MICHAEL W. WATERS

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to host Reverend Waters as our guest chaplain today.

Reverend Waters is a true community servant and a man of God. He is the founding pastor of Joy Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church—AME—of Dallas, Texas.

Reverend Waters is a pastor, a professor, an award-winning author, a community leader, and a social commentator. Reverend Waters' words of hope and empowerment inspire national and international audiences.

As a notable friend of the community, Reverend Waters served as a keynote speaker at my Annual Dallas Prayer Breakfast this year. His engaging personality and purposeful speech captivated the attention of all those who attended.

As a strong leader, Reverend Waters is able to understand the unique needs of our community. He knows no stranger when he walks into the room, and his charismatic nature allows him to connect with everyone he meets.

It is my pleasure that he has come today to be our guest chaplain. May God continue to bless him.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, cruelty to animals is a scourge, and there is no worse example than animal fighting that is for so-called pleasure and definite profit.

I am pleased today to introduce the Parity in Animal Cruelty Enforcement Act, which is to close a loophole.

Animal fighting is prohibited in the United States, but it is allowed in some U.S. territories. This is important for us because what we have is a situation where animals are manipulated, drugged, and put into situations where their aggression is heightened. It is disgusting.

I am pleased to join with friends on the other side of the aisle—Messrs. BLUMENAUER and NOLAN—and Representatives on the Republican side—Messrs. RODNEY DAVIS, YODER, and KNIGHT—to come together on a bipartisan basis to address this trouble. I ask for cosponsors.

BIPARTISAN TAX REFORM

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, well, not surprisingly, Republicans have had to delay the release of their tax plan because it is so deeply unpopular. We haven't seen all of the details yet, but what we know about it is that this is really bad for working families.

The nonpartisan Tax Policy Center says that the Republican plan raises taxes on many middle class families to pay for a massive tax cut for the people at the very top, the wealthiest Americans.

The details matter. A family of four earning $50,000 could see their taxes go up 380 percent. Meanwhile, 80 percent of the benefits of this ''billionaires first'' tax plan go to the richest 1 percent—80 percent of the benefits to the richest 1 percent. That is not middle class tax relief.

And how do we pay for these massive tax cuts to the wealthy? What are we going to do?

We are going to see cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, and education.

If anybody thinks we can do this and go big on infrastructure and rebuild America's capacity to produce, they better think twice. Plus, saddling our grandkids with a huge debt.

What happened to the deficit hawks in this place?

This is wrong, and we ought to reject it.

IMPROVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, that was introduced by Congressman WESTERMAN.

The House will consider this bill today, which will improve forest management and cut the bureaucratic red tape that has been preventing sound management practices for the Forest Service.

Mr. Speaker, devastating wildfires have resulted in the loss of property, loss of pristine landscapes, and, most importantly, the loss of life. 2017 has been the costliest wildfire season on record, with the Forest Service spending over $2 billion. While not the only issue, the greatest cause for this increase in wildfire is a severe lack of forest management.

This bill provides Federal land management agencies the immediate tools to expedite and increase the scale and efficiency of forest management projects without sacrificing environmental protections.

Mr. Speaker, we must do everything in our power to stop these catastrophic wildfires and encourage better land management of our forests.

Today's bill is one step in the right direction and I encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, beginning today, millions of Americans have the opportunity to buy or change their healthcare plan through the Affordable Care Act exchange.

The open enrollment period ends December 15, so consumers need to act now. We only have 45 days to shop around, receive assistance from local organizations, and make a final decision. But many people may not know that because the Trump administration has taken several administrative actions to undermine the ACA.

Cutting the open enrollment period in half, to slashing advertising and outreach funding by 90 percent, to announcing a shutdown of healthcare.gov on Sundays during open enrollment and other sabotage efforts, the Trump administration and the Republican majority have tried to restrict the access to healthcare for Americans.

I encourage every American who needs health insurance to visit healthcare.gov and get covered. Financial assistance is available, and about 80 percent of the enrollees who pick plans on healthcare.gov will be able to get insurance for $75 a month or less.

CONGRATULATING OAKWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Oakwood Elementary School in Wayzata for being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for academic excellence.

This is a big honor. It is a big deal. I visited Oakwood myself, and only eight schools in Minnesota have received this recognition this year. That is because exemplary, high-performing schools like Oakwood rank among the highest performing schools with top scores in State assessments.

One important note worth mentioning is that Oakwood Elementary School has done significant work addressing the achievement gap in their community so that every one of their students has what they need to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, every one of Oakwood's teachers, staff, students, and parents should be commended for this accomplishment. Congratulations, again, to Oakwood Elementary School for being named a National Blue Ribbon School.

FLIGHT STANDARDS

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, no family or community should have to relive the devastating loss we felt on February 12, 2009, the day Colgan Air Flight 3407 crashed in western New York, killing all aboard and one on the ground.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Flight 3407 families and a bipartisan collection of Members of Congress, new flight safety standards have saved other families from similar pain, achieving 7 years of no commercial airline fatalities.

Yet some, including the new nominee to the National Transportation Safety Board, are questioning the need for these hard-fought, commonsense flight safety and training standards.

You have a right to know which airline is flying your plane, you have a right to know that your pilot is well rested, and you have a right to know that the pilot is adequately trained to handle any challenges that might occur in flight. For these rights and for enhanced safety, you can thank the families of Flight 3407 for their work in reaching these standards, and you can join me in fighting to make sure that we keep them.

CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS

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

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, this week, we will see on the floor the Championing Healthy Kids Act. It will include a number of different reforms, which will include the Children's Health Insurance Program, the CHAMPION Act, and my bill, the CARE Act.

We must increase access throughout our communities across the country. By expanding our residency program, we will see new doctors, especially in these underserved areas. Expanding our residency program will allow our medical schools to have people in our communities practicing medicine, and, ultimately, filling this doctor shortage that we have today.

I look forward to the passing of the Championing Healthy Kids Act, which will, again, help our children with their health insurance coverage and expand our residency program at a much-needed time.

TAX REFORM

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, right now, President Trump and the Republicans are trying to pass a massive tax cut for billionaires, millionaires, and wealthy corporations, and reward companies that ship American jobs overseas. The only way they can pay for it is by raising taxes on working people and cutting more than $1 trillion from Medicare and Medicaid.

This is not what Donald Trump, the candidate, promised the American people when he ran for President. He promised he would protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, but it turns out that wasn't true.

Wealthy Americans are doing better than ever. The top 1 percent are earning three times as much as they did 30 years ago, but working people haven't seen their pay go up at all.

Let's get serious. Let's get working people a better deal that cuts their taxes. Let's get them a better deal that protects Social Security and Medicare. Let's not give tax breaks to companies that ship American jobs overseas.

The American people deserve a better deal, not this raw deal that hurts working families.

HONORING HERSHEL ''WOODY'' WILLIAMS

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

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Hershel ''Woody'' Williams and commemorate a naval vessel, which was christened in his honor on Saturday, October 21, in San Diego, California. The ship will provide for accommodations for up to 250 personnel, will offer a 52,000-square-foot flight deck, and will support helicopters and tilt-rotor aircraft.

Woody Williams grew up on a dairy farm in Fairmont, West Virginia, and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in Charleston, West Virginia, on May 26, 1943.

Woody landed in Iwo Jima on February 21, 1945. Woody fought through the remainder of the 5-week-long battle and was wounded on March 6, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart.

As a result of Woody Williams' courageous service in the 21st Marines, 3rd Marine Division in the Battle of Iwo Jima, he received the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Truman. Today, at 93 years old, he is the last living Medal of Honor recipient from that battle.

I join all West Virginians in congratulating Woody Williams for this incredible honor. He is an unparalleled advocate for veterans from all eras and a fine example of what it means not only to be a West Virginian but an American.

□ 1215

HONORING THE LIFE OF HEATHER ALVARADO

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

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 1-month anniversary of the terrible shooting that happened in my hometown, Las Vegas, on October 1.

I rise to remember the life of Heather Alvarado, a woman who was known for her hugs, her love of hot pink, and her beautiful green eyes.

Heather lived for her kids, Syrus, Albie, and Charlie, and had traveled to Las Vegas to attend the Route 91 concert with her daughter.

Heather loved going on vacation with her family and spending time outdoors. She loved planning parties for her children and friends, including hosting elaborate Halloween parties every year. She was known for her caring nature and kindness. Heather's husband, Albert, said that she saw the good in everyone and would do almost anything to help others.

I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Heather's friends and family. Please know that the city of Las Vegas and the State of Nevada and the whole country grieve with you.

NEEDVILLE HARVEST FESTIVAL

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, there is a great town back home in Texas 22, which some people think has a strange name. It is called Needville, Texas.

The folks in Needville need nothing except open ground and clear skies with millions of bright stars visible at night. On the third weekend in October for the last 34 years, the whole town turns out for the Needville Harvest Festival.

The Harvest Fest is all Texas. There is a talent show with twirlers and clog dancers; barbecue cook-offs; contests for the best fajitas, the best pork loins, the best chicken, and the best pork ribs; and they give away a 4-by-4 Gator. City slickers think that is some sort of lizard. It is a big farm tool, a farm tractor.

The best part is all the money they raise goes to their city to improve their 60-acre Harvest Park and the Needville schools.

I will close with a message from Mayor Ernie Stuart, Harvest Festival President Chris Janicek, and my guest for President Trump's speech this upcoming February, Katie Vacek. They all say, ''Go Astros. Beat L.A.''

THE STORY OF JUAN NAVARRO

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

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Juan Navarro in Monmouth, Oregon, and to continue to urge Speaker RYAN to put forth a clean Dream Act bill.

Juan was brought to the United States, when he was 3 years old, from Guadalajara, Mexico. Juan suffers from cerebral palsy and was unable to walk. Juan was admitted as a research patient in Shriners Hospital, and after multiple surgeries and 12 long years of physical therapy, Juan now is able to walk without any support.

While Juan was receiving care, his parents had to work two jobs, something we all used to do. They did this to provide a better life for Juan.

Over time, Juan excelled in school, and Oregon became his home.

Juan is an active member in the Monmouth and Western Oregon University communities. He serves as a diversity student mentor, works with the faculty at Western Oregon to create a campus website that lists available resources for undocumented students, works for the city of Monmouth as a community liaison, and started a support group for DREAMers at Western Oregon University.

Juan is the first person in his family to graduate from college and is currently attending graduate school at Oregon State University's College Student Services Administration program. He currently works as a graduate assistant and hopes to bring more institutional changes for students of color.

Without DACA, none of this would have been possible for Juan, and our country would have lost out on a motivated and talented person.

Young people across the country are relying on us. We need to pass a clean Dream Act that will recognize Juan and the over 800,000 DREAMers as equal members of our community.

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, every November we commemorate Native American Heritage Month. I am honored to share a long-standing partnership with Indian Tribes located in Arizona and across the United States. This includes our most recent efforts to extend the AMBER Alert program to Indian Country, which will ensure that every family in Indian Country is afforded the same resources to find a missing child.

Today I am especially grateful to recognize the valiant service of Native American U.S. Marines during the Iwo Jima campaign:

Ira Hayes, a member of the Gila River Pima Indian community, is most notably remembered as one of the servicemen who raised the American flag over Mount Suribachi.

The Navajo Code Talkers were also irreplaceable during World War II. The

Code Talkers effectively transmitted combat messages across enemy lines to avoid interception and decryption.

Major Howard Connor said it best: ''Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima.''

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to highlight their contributions to Arizona and the United States.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, the Children's Health Insurance Program, which is also known as CHIP, provides low-cost health insurance to nearly 9 million children all across the country, including over 25,000 children in my home State of Hawaii. Together with Medicaid, these programs have reduced the Nation's uninsured rate for children to a record low of 5 percent.

Republicans in Congress let CHIP expire back in September, jeopardizing the healthcare of millions of children.

At the current pace, my home State of Hawaii will exhaust all current CHIP funding by the end of this year, leaving thousands of our keiki unable to visit a doctor for routine checkups and to receive immunizations, prescriptions, or more.

We must act now to reauthorize this CHIP program to ensure that our children have access to the healthcare that they need. We cannot neglect those who need help the most by failing to act and reauthorize this legislation. We must act now.

WE NEED A BIPARTISAN SOLUTION TO REAUTHORIZE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, this year my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have wasted months in often misguided debate over repealing the Affordable Care Act. While this debate has raged within one political party, the Children's Health Insurance Program has expired.

I received a letter last night from Governor Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania. He wants us to act to protect the hundreds of thousands of children in our Commonwealth who depend on CHIP funding to meet their basic healthcare needs.

The GOP has failed to reauthorize CHIP over arguments of how to pay for it and the distractions of a failed effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act. That puts us in a tough spot in Philadelphia and the Commonwealth.

I am convinced that something must be done because, as Governor Wolf points out, time is essential for our State and numerous others; yet 300,000 kids are enrolled in CHIP, which will soon run out of money to pay for their care.

The kids who rely on CHIP funding are some of the most vulnerable in our State, and, frankly, they need action now. The solution doesn't have to be partisan. Providing low-income kids and the hospitals that serve them isn't a Democratic or Republican issue; it is a commonsense issue. The failure to act is unacceptable, so I say now we need to do something.

I urge my colleagues in the GOP to get to work on a bipartisan solution.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2936, RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 595 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 595

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2936) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and amendments specified in this resolution and shall not exceed one hour equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Agriculture and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendments in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-36. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, just yesterday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 595, providing for consideration of an important piece of legislation, H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 2936 under a structured rule, with four Democratic amendments made in order and two bipartisan amendments and one Republican-led amendment made in order.

Mr. Speaker, this rule provides for consideration of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, a bill that is critically important to my district in central Washington State and to rural, forested districts like it across the United States who continue to face devastation from catastrophic wildfires as we have seen, just this last year, a great example of.

This bipartisan, comprehensive legislation is aimed at addressing the disastrous consequences of wildfires by utilizing the tools the Forest Service and other agencies have to reduce the threats posed by these wildfires, by insects, by disease infestation, and by dangerous old forest overgrowth that serves as a literal tinderbox for wildfires. This legislation will expedite and improve forest management activities in Federal forests to counteract these threats.

This legislation, spearheaded by my friend and colleague from Arkansas, Representative BRUCE WESTERMAN, who is a trained forester himself, is comprised of a truly comprehensive effort developed here in the people's House. It is bipartisan. This bipartisan support demonstrates that the threat of catastrophic wildfires does not just impact a red or a blue district, but, rather, it poses a threat to communities across the United States.

□ 1230

H.R. 2936 would provide Federal land management agencies immediate tools to increase the pace and the scale of forest management projects to dramatically improve the health and resiliency of our national forests, ensuring robust protection of the environment. Active management leads to healthier forests. It is that simple.

This legislation also allows expedited review for collaborative projects in Federal forests and removes incentives for special interest groups to file frivolous lawsuits. By requiring litigants opposing active management projects to propose an alternative management option, we can instill accountability into a system that is wrought with litigation.

Additionally, the legislation bolsters locally led forest management and hazardous fuel reduction projects to improve forest health.

By engaging local stakeholders, we can lessen the severity and the costs of wildfires, while protecting the communities and the environment.

Mr. Speaker, another major component of our Nation's wildfire crisis is the broken system with which we fund firefighting suppression. When these firefighting costs exceed the existing budget, the U.S. Forest Service transfers funds from other vital forest management program accounts in order to pay for wildfire suppression. I and a lot of other people in this Chamber have been outspoken critics of this dangerous broken cycle known as fire borrowing. That also is a very bipartisan position that is taken. H.R. 2936 provides a major step forward in ending this cycle. By raiding accounts that provide for forest management programs which help prevent wildfires, we tie one hand behind our back in an effort to both prevent and suppress these catastrophic wildfires. This legislation will help to put an end to this longstanding problem.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents know as well as anyone the immense threat that wildfires pose to local communities. In just the past 4 years, the fourth district of my State, my district, has seen the two largest fires in Washington State's history. We have lost hundreds of homes and businesses and structures. My constituents are still struggling to recover from the Carlton Complex Fire of 2014 and the Okanogan Complex Fire of 2015. We lost three firefighters that year. That truly is a high cost.

Active forest management is a matter of saving lives and livelihoods, of protecting our communities, and ensuring our constituents' health and safety, which is why I am proud to support this rule and the underlying legislation that it represents today.

Mr. Speaker, as I have often said, we cannot continue to limp from one devastating fire season to the next. We must take significant steps toward reforestation, rehabilitation, and overall forest management. This legislation will allow us to do just that. We must begin to prevent, to suppress, to mitigate the threat of catastrophic wildfires, and the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017 will be a momentous opportunity to turn around our diseased and overgrown Federal forests. This legislation is essential and desperately needed to change the current path of forest management on public lands. It is outdated, unsustainable, and dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, this is a straightforward rule allowing for consideration of this critical piece of legislation that will help protect our rural communities and ensure that we are prepared to respond to devastating and catastrophic wildfires that have plagued many areas of our country in the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, I support the rule's adoption, I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, before I yield to my colleague from Florida, I would like to share one last note. Just a few weeks ago, the new chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Tony Tooke, came to Capitol Hill and briefed some of my colleagues, including me, regarding this year's devastating wildfire season.

He reported to us that over 8 million acres, just this year, have burned. We have also lost dozens of lives, thousands of homes. Chief Tooke left us with the stark fact that while more than 8 million acres burned this year, another 80 million acres across the United States are at high risk of catching fire—80 million acres. Mr. Speaker, if that does not show how dire this problem is, then I certainly can't tell you what does.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, before beginning my remarks, I would offer condolences to the grieving families who lost loved ones in yesterday's terrorist attack in New York City, and to have the people of New York know—and I know I speak for all of us, and there will be a more appropriate recognition at a time in the future, I am sure, but to have them know that all of us grieve with them and are concerned not only for those who lost their lives, but to assist in preventing measures of this type in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Washington for yielding to me the customary 30 minutes for debate.

This bill is a sweeping attack on responsible forest management policy that upends key environmental safeguards, limits public participation in land management decisions, and prioritizes commercial timber harvest over transparent, science-based management. In other words, this is business as usual for this Republican majority when it comes to protecting our environment.

A footnote right there, my friend from the State of Washington does highlight, rightly, concerns not only for his congressional district, but areas throughout the country that have experienced wildfires.

Many of us have talked about this in conjunction with other disasters and a need for this Congress to be able to address the shortfall in funding for such important measures.

During this Congress alone, my Republican friends have brought to the floor bills that undermine the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to issue independent and objective scientific conclusions, weaken regulations of pesticides, and repeal rulemakings aimed at effective, science-based management of public lands, just to name a few things.

Repeatedly, my Republican friends ignore science and attack environmental protections all in an all-too-obvious attempt to help commercial interests over sound conservation policy. This focus not only undermines our public lands, but it also harms the health and safety of the American people.

This bill continues the assault on our Nation's environmental protections, and it may be one of the most irresponsible examples yet.

Under the guise of responding to the recent tragic wildfires in California and elsewhere in this Nation, this legislation attacks the National Environmental Policy Act, known as NEPA, which requires Federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their actions.

The bill also attacks the Endangered Species Act by requiring redundant and unnecessary reporting requirements. It blocks access to the courts and limits recovery in environmental justice cases. Just for good measure, this bill effectively overturns President Obama's administration's monument expansion.

The bill does little to fix the true problem of wildfire management, namely the chronic underfunding of wildfire management. Any serious proposal must address the constant funding shortages at the U.S. Forest Service by increasing the amount of Federal funding available for wildfire suppression. A successful solution needs to provide advanced access to emergency funding.

Unfortunately, today's legislation does no such thing. Yesterday, the administration offered its statement of administration policy, and, at best, it is tepid. It says, ''The administration appreciates the intent of H.R. 2936 . . . and is supportive of land management reforms like those outlined in the legislation,'' and then comes the however. ''The administration, however, has concerns about the legislation's revisions to the Stafford Act, which would force competition for funding between wildfires on Federal land and other disasters already covered by the Stafford Act, including hurricanes.''

It goes on to say, '' . . . the administration supports a separate, annual cap

adjustment for wildfire suppression operations, which will resolve concerns about the sufficiency of funds for wildfire suppression and avoid unnecessary competition for Stafford Act funds.''

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Statement of Administration Policy.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 2936—RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017—REP. WESTERMAN R–AR, AND COSPONSORS

The Administration strongly believes that funding for wildland fire management must be addressed in order to enable the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to better manage the Nation's forests and other public lands. The Administration's second disaster funding request, submitted to Congress on October 4, 2017, underscored this belief. The request also noted the Administration's belief that land management reforms are critical to solving the problem of ''fire borrowing''—taking funds from forest management programs to cover fire costs that exceed appropriations—in a comprehensive manner, rather than through a funding-only appropriations approach.

The Administration appreciates the intent of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, and is supportive of land management reforms like those outlined in the legislation. The Administration, however, has concerns about the legislation's revisions to the Stafford Act, which would force competition for funding between wildfires on Federal land and other disasters already covered by the Stafford Act, including hurricanes.

Wildland Fire Management Funding

Last year, Federal wildfire suppression spending reached $2.9 billion, an amount that signals clearly the need for Congress to address the rising cost of fire suppression operations. The dependence on ''fire borrowing'' to cover funding shortfalls in times of severe wildfire impedes the missions of our land management agencies, including by taking critical funding from programs that help reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, restore and maintain healthy functioning ecosystems, and yield timber production.

The Administration, however, has concerns with re-purposing the Stafford Act to address wildfires. The purpose of the Stafford Act is to assist State, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments that become overwhelmed when responding to and recovering from natural disasters affecting their jurisdictions. H.R. 2936 would modify the Stafford Act by creating a new type of disaster declaration to address the cost of wildfire suppression on Federal land, thereby changing long-standing principles governing Federal support to SLTT governments. As we have seen in this year's historic Atlantic hurricane season, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must continue to be focused on its existing mission, and the Stafford Act's Disaster Relief Fund must remain dedicated solely to that mission.

Instead of the approach outlined in H.R. 2936, the Administration supports a separate, annual cap adjustment for wildfire suppression operations, which will resolve concerns about the sufficiency of funds for wildfire suppression and avoid unnecessary competition for Stafford Act funds.

Improving Forest Management

The Administration appreciates H.R. 2936's recognition that fixing the funding component of fire borrowing will not, on its own, stop the worsening trend of catastrophic wildfires. Meaningful forest management reforms to strengthen our ability to restore the Nation's forests and improve their resilience to destructive wildfires must be a part of any permanent solution. H.R. 2936's provisions that expedite environmental approval for proactive forest management, including hazardous fuel reduction and post-fire timber salvage and reforestation actions, are important steps forward. The Administration supports and will continue to work with Congress on the details of the forest management reform proposals.

Although the Administration has concerns with H.R. 2936's modifications to the Stafford Act, the Administration will continue working with Congress to enact a sustainable solution to ''fire borrowing'' that does not adversely affect FEMA's critical disaster relief funding and that recognizes the need for a comprehensive solution to the problem of wildfires.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the bill does little to fix the true problem of wildfire management. Any serious proposal, as I have said, must address the constant funding shortages, and that is what, among other things, the administration suggested.

Mr. Speaker, this year has been a wake-up call. We must do more to respond to the natural disasters that face our Nation. After three major hurricanes and devastating wildfires in my friend from Washington's State, in California, in Montana, and even in the Everglades of Florida we have experienced some wildfires, albeit not at the magnitude of loss of life or property as existed in some of the others, our resources and agencies are stretched to the brink.

Weeks after the storms, millions of people across the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are without power and without reliable access to clean drinking water. FEMA Administrator Brock Long testified just yesterday that the response to these storms and wildfires and other disasters—we have had tornadoes that have come along as well—is costing the Federal Government $200 million a day.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Office of Management and Budget is currently working to send a proposal to Congress for a third supplemental spending package to address the recovery needs in the affected areas. I urge them and my colleagues here in Congress to act swiftly to provide the resources that so many people desperately need. In the meantime, what have we gotten from Republicans? Bipartisanship? Sound science-based proposals? No. Instead, the Republican majority has ignored bipartisanship, and, yesterday, in the Rules Committee, a bipartisan measure was offered that was a thoughtful proposal on this topic, and was rejected, and presented this bill that we have here now that doesn't address the real issues facing public land and wildfire management, but, rather, guts environmental protection and overturns President Obama's monument expansion.

□ 1245

Mr. Speaker, this is business as usual for House Republicans. But if we are going to seriously address natural disasters and how we respond to them, I encourage my friends on the other side of the aisle to put aside their partisanship, reconsider their denial of climate change and its effects on our environment, and join Democrats in working together to address this and other important issues faced by all Americans.

There were two amendments that were offered yesterday by my colleagues from California. Both of those amendments were not made in order. I don't think it is right when people offer legislation, particularly those that have just been damaged, as our colleagues, Congressmen Thompson and Matsui, and others in the northern California region. They at least should have had an opportunity to offer up their amendment and have it voted against if people felt so here in this body.

I would hope, in the future, we would make a correction of that kind of undertaking. I would hope all Members of this body would have an opportunity to present their ideas on any legislation, and something as important as this could have allowed for an open rule, rather than for partisan activity to reign supreme.

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I would just note that the admonition of my friend from Florida, that to bring bipartisan proposals forward, this absolutely is a bipartisan bill; support from both sides of the aisle, because, as I said in my opening comments, these kind of fires know no political boundaries, know no political lines. So I am very happy to report that we have a strong bipartisan effort right here in front of us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN).

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the underlying bill, Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

I do thank the gentleman from Washington State for this time. I urge all Members, Republicans and Democrats, to support the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to focus my remarks on one specific and very important section of the underlying bill. This pertains to allowing young men and young women the opportunity to work and to learn the family trade of logging.

Now, logging is a very big business in the State of Maine. About 90 percent of our State, Mr. Speaker, is forested, and we have generations and traditions of logging in the State of Maine. Logging is often a family-run business where the practice and the technique of harvesting and then transporting saw logs to mills are passed down from one generation to another.

Now, H.R. 2936 brings Federal regulations in line with this new technology and new standards of safety by allowing family-owned logging businesses

the ability to train 16- and 17-year-olds under very close supervision of their parents.

We need to make certain, Mr. Speaker, that the next generation of loggers are able to learn what they need to know, how to run these family-run businesses, including the operation and maintenance of their equipment. We do this, please, by supporting the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, will ensure that the long-term health of the logging business industry is supported and can continue from one generation to another.

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

If we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 3440, the Dream Act. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would help thousands of young people who are Americans in every way except on paper.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I might add, attendant to this, on yesterday, my colleagues, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, CARLOS CURBELO, FREDERICA WILSON, and myself, introduced legislation calling for giving 300,000 migrants in this country, from a variety of countries, an opportunity for permanent residence—those from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM), my good friend, to speak to the issue that I just talked about, the Dream Act.

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, it has been 57 days since the President abruptly and irresponsibly terminated the DACA program.

For 57 days, students have been panicked about how much longer they can go to school. Brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters, are terrified that they might lose their loved ones any minute. Parents are afraid to take their children to the hospital or to school, and breadwinners don't know whether they will be able to continue to earn a paycheck to support themselves and their families.

For 57 days, the Republican-controlled Congress has been silent, doing nothing to provide certainty for 800,000 American DREAMers who are caught up in Congressional dysfunction. Without a permanent legislative fix, these young Americans, like Maritza from Texas, will be at risk of detention and deportation.

Maritza works part time to help her pay for college so she can pursue her dream career in journalism after graduation. Over months, she and her family saved up $1,000 to pay for an attorney and the DACA program application fee. All she needed was her school to provide her records so she could finish her application.

But then Hurricane Harvey hit and flooded her family's home in east Houston and shut down school for 2 weeks. While Maritza and her mother were recovering from Harvey's devastation, they were the victims of another disaster, but this one was created by their own government.

They watched Attorney General Jeff Sessions announce on live TV that the Trump administration was ending DACA and cutting off new applications for young immigrants just like her. The devastating news crushed Maritza and her family. Now they and countless others have waited 57 days for us to fix it.

Today we have the opportunity to uphold our values and to pass the Dream Act so that these young Americans aren't waiting in fear any longer.

Mr. Speaker, there is a quote directly above your chair from Daniel Webster imploring us to do ''something worthy to be remembered.''

So how will we be remembered? Will the Republican-controlled Congress continue to sit here and passively accept the Trump administration's cowardly decision to eliminate protections for countless DREAMers across the country? Or do we want to do something about it?

We have an opportunity to protect our neighbors, coworkers, classmates, friends, constituents, and members of our military who have done everything to try to contribute to this great country. One vote would change the lives of nearly 800,000 Americans forever. One vote would allow them to pursue the American Dream, to go to school, to continue to work, to buy a house, or to start a business.

Mr. Speaker, isn't that why we were sent here? Wouldn't that be something worthy to be remembered?

I ask my colleagues to vote against the previous question so that we can immediately bring the Dream Act to the floor and provide certainty for Americans like Maritza, who want to continue to work, learn, and live in the country that they love, the only country they have ever known. We cannot afford to wait another day.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, we do deal with a lot of important issues on this floor. Today we are talking about something that, in this country, people are losing property, we are losing our natural resources, and, certainly, people are losing their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) to talk further on this important topic.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the bill for which it was made, the Resilient Federal Forests Act. The rule makes in order several needed amendments, but, more importantly, it allows for much-needed debate and consideration of a bipartisan bill to address the growing economic and environmental threats posed by catastrophic wildfires.

This bill will give Federal agencies immediate tools to increase the effectiveness of our forest management projects while preserving environmental protections.

While of immense benefit to preserving our national parks, the bill also supports the private sector by addressing obstructionist litigation against management activity, and rewarding collaboration by local governments and local stakeholders when they work together to foster more effective management projects.

Mr. Speaker, North Carolina's Fifth District is home to pristine national parks, including the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, otherwise known as America's favorite drive.

I am an unwavering supporter of our Nation's national parks, and I look forward to equipping better our park managers to protect our forests from wildfires and other threats to their environmental integrity.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, through you, I would advise my good friend from Washington that I have no further speakers and I will be prepared to close whenever he is. Until such time, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the prime sponsor of the bill in question today.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington State for not only yielding me this time and for his good work on the Rules Committee, but for his support of my bill, H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak right now not only as a Member of the United States House of Representatives, but also as a forester, educated at this country's first forestry school, licensed by my home State by exam to practice forestry. If there is an issue that I understand that comes before this Congress, it is our forests.

As I listen to accusations from across the aisle, I trust my colleagues are not intentionally trying to mislead, but they seem to know so much about just what isn't so. This is a bipartisan bill with Democratic cosponsors and it is based on sound scientific management.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the floor today to debate a rule and, as you know, this rule is part of the process of the House of Representatives that will conclude later this afternoon with votes not only on this rule, but eventually on the underlying legislation.

The process of moving this bill through the House began earlier this year, as I and a number of Members representing multiple committees talked about and debated different ideas and what we hoped for in a final piece of legislation. After hundreds of meetings with stakeholders on all sides of this issue, on both sides of the aisle,

and countless hours of work by Members and staff alike, I believe that the House stands ready to vote to improve the condition of our national forest land.

However, the hard work of everyone involved will be for naught if the Senate fails to act. For that reason, I encourage our colleagues in the Senate to take up this legislation, debate it, offer solutions, and act to make a difference on our national forests and our rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. Our national forests are in the poorest condition this Nation has ever seen, and will continue to degrade if we fail to act and complete the work that has started here. However, I believe that we have reason to be encouraged. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee recently held a hearing on a discussion draft that includes similar forest management provisions as H.R. 2936, and I know the other committees of jurisdiction are working on forest reform legislation as well.

□ 1300

This is not only a forest health issue; it is a public health issue that demands action. Shame on us if we continue to stand idly by and watch our treasured national forests go up in smoke while people suffer and die. I stand here today to encourage the House to adopt this rule and pass this bill, therefore allowing the United States Senate to take up the legislation, or, at the very least, something similar to it. Pass it and allow us to meet at conference and work out the differences. Let us present a workable solution to the President for his signature.

This year, more than 8.8 million acres of wildfire burned, as has been pointed out, and there is an additional 80 million acres on the verge of spawning more catastrophic wildfires. How many more acres must burn? How many more lives must be lost?

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, how many more dreams will be ruined before we come together to address this critical issue?

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the rule.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY).

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Mr. NEWHOUSE, from the Rules Committee, as well as Mr. WESTERMAN, for their work on this bill.

I rise in support, Mr. Speaker, of the rule for consideration of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act, a bill that will help address the wildfire crisis that is plaguing our Nation as well as begin the very important process of restoring the health of our forests.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this has been one of the largest wildfire years in our Nation's history. We have seen livelihoods across the West threatened and seen the lives of our brave firefighters put in harm's way. These fires are deadly, and, tragically, more than 40 people lost their lives when fast-moving wildfires swept through northern California just a few weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, we have particularly felt the effects in my State of Wyoming, where we find ourselves in an absolutely indefensible situation. Fires are being caused and worsened by Federal mismanagement. Eight years of Federal policy opposing proven methods of forest management and, instead, focusing on efforts to prevent all human use of our forests have done significant damage.

This damage is not just to the forests that we have had to watch burn, Mr. Speaker, but we have also seen tremendous damage to our water in postfire situations where the water is contaminated with ash; significant damage to wildlife habitat, the health of our forests, to property, and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, to human life.

Under the bad policies and the mismanagement from the Federal Government, we have seen our forests become overgrown, accumulating unsafe levels of hazardous biofuels that have become an absolute tinderbox for these fires. We must take action now.

This bill, as my colleagues have pointed out, is a bipartisan effort to begin to take the steps we know will help reduce hazardous fuels and improve the management of our forests. We must also act, Mr. Speaker, as a Congress, to fix the fire-borrowing issue. The Resilient Federal Forests Act takes a significant step toward ending the practice of fire borrowing, and simplifies the process for implementing proper, effective forest management strategies.

Mr. Speaker, I urge, therefore, the adoption of the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, to demonstrate the importance of this particular piece of legislation to the whole country.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule for H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. This bill is a commonsense, thoughtful approach to restore our forests and minimize forest fire risk.

First and foremost, I thank Representative WESTERMAN for understanding the need for these vital reforms. He has been a great partner to work with and has a keen understanding of how to restore our forests.

This bill contains a number of needed reforms, but, in particular, H.R. 2936 will put an end to obstructionist litigation that has been paralyzing the ability of the Forest Service to manage their own land for years.

The legislation creates an arbitration pilot program that requires anyone suing to block a forest management activity to produce an alternative solution, providing effective resolutions to problems rather than frivolous litigant activity. The bill also puts a limit on the amount of taxpayer dollars that can go to pay legal fees of obstructionist groups when they sue to stop management.

It seems that every year we have a longer, more devastating fire season. In my home State of California this year, it has been particularly devastating in both lives and land lost. These fires demand that we act, and we need to act now, to fix our forest management.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership on this issue.

One last thing: Go Dodgers.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, most all Western States were impacted in one way or another by catastrophic fires this summer. Particularly hard hit was the great State of Oregon.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from the Rules Committee, my colleague from across the river in Washington State. My apologies to Washingtonians because one of our fires, the Eagle Creek fire, actually spotted across the mighty Columbia River, set fire to part of the forests in Washington State down near Stevenson. Fortunately, that fire was extinguished. The one on the Oregon side was terribly dangerous, man-caused, human-caused. It blew out 14 miles in one night headed toward Portland.

These are monster fires. We lost 678,000 acres this year to forest fires in my great State of Oregon. It is about two-thirds of the entire size of the State of Rhode Island. It is enormous. This is happening year after year, and the consequences are extraordinary.

Smoke chokes our airsheds. Schools literally had to shut down and send kids home because it was too smoky to have them inside the school. The 30th anniversary of Cycle Oregon was canceled. That is a major annual bicycle ride that occurs; 30 years, the 30th anniversary, canceled. They couldn't find a way to pull it off. The Shakespeare Festival down in Ashland, nine performances had to be canceled; $400,000, Mr. Speaker, just in ticket receipts that had to be foregone. I am told they had to lay off people as a result.

When you think about not only the lost forests—this is what a forest looks like after it is burned—the ground is often sterilized. You can't even go back and replant for a year or two in some cases because there is no soil left.

The impacts are enormous on our environment. Those of us who are concerned about the environment, about carbon emissions into the atmosphere,

in 2015, when a like amount was burned in Oregon, the Forest Service estimated the blazes emitted more than 90,000 tons of fine particulates and 14.2 million tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. That is equivalent to more than 3 million cars; 3 million cars.

The cause of these increasingly catastrophic fires, as Dr. John Bailey of the Oregon State University's College of Forestry pointed out during a hearing earlier this month in our Energy and Commerce Committee, in some cases, the forest landscapes in my part of Oregon, eastern Oregon that would have historically held about 20 trees per acre, have more than 1,000 trees growing there today.

You see, we have stopped management. In many cases, we have stopped fire. The forests continue to grow, and die, and build, and get more dense, and so when fire does strike, it is with devastating consequence.

My friend from Florida, and he is my friend, when he gets thunderstorms in Florida in the summer, he gets a lot of rain with it, I bet. If we have thunderstorms in Oregon, we don't get the rain. We went nearly 90 days without any rain, but we still got lightning. The lightning torches these forests and starts a lot of these blazes.

A 2014 study in California by the Nature Conservancy, Forest Service, and others found that these types of projects can reduce the intensity of fires up to 70 percent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Poe of Texas). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. My intensity of this issue is almost that of the fires we fight.

We can reduce the size and intensity of fires by 70 percent if we do the kinds of projects that thin out the forest, better manage, and be better stewards of our public Federal forests that are contemplated as a result of this legislation.

In Oregon, this bill would take away an arbitrary prohibition on harvesting trees over 21 inches in diameter that has tied the hands of our forest managers. We would clarify timber production mandates of the unique Oregon-California lands in southern and western Oregon to live with the underlying statute and actually have it enforced.

When fires do happen, we would exchange this for a new, healthy forest that would grow green trees that sequester carbon and restore a landscape that we in the West so enjoy.

It is long past time to fix our broken forest policy. I commend the Rules Committee for bringing this bill forward, and I commend Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. BISHOP, and others who have worked on this on both sides of the aisle to help us stop the fires that ravage, and kill, and destroy, and to help us have healthy, green forests.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the gentleman from Oregon for his passionate words about the impact of catastrophic fires in his State.

He is right. The fire from Oregon did jump the Columbia River into Washington, but that is not the only thing that they shared with us this summer. My own community, the Yakima Valley, was filled with smoke for probably 6 weeks this summer, causing all kinds of health issues for the citizens of central Washington, not just from Oregon, but smoke also from as far away as Montana and Idaho, and other parts of the Northwest.

In fact, I was just handed a news article, I would like to note, from the Methow Valley News, which if you have never been to the Methow Valley, it is one of the most pristine, beautiful places on the face of the Earth. They are talking about the quality of air in the Methow Valley in the community of Twisp.

The air pollution in Twisp, Washington, is considered among the worst in the State, if you can imagine that, in some of the most beautiful, clean, pristine areas that you can imagine. The air quality, largely due to these catastrophic fires year round, has been impacted negatively. That is something that, thanks to the Methow Valley News, they are making very clear to all of us that we need to do something to address this particularly important issue.

I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS), my neighbor to the east, the Congressperson from the Fifth Congressional District of the State of Washington.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this very important issue.

I am pleased to see this legislation, the Resilient Federal Forests Act coming to the floor today. I also want to express appreciation to Representative WESTERMAN for his leadership through the years on this issue. In recent years, in my home State, as has been mentioned, in Washington State, we have seen larger and larger devastating wildfires, breaking all of the records, and it seems like every year they just get larger and larger, and more devastating.

They impact people's health. It is not unusual now for air quality warnings to be in eastern Washington, not just for days, but weeks at end, where it really does impact people's health. It jeopardizes our safety—the stories of people who are caught in the midst of these fires—and it is destroying our environment.

We like to think of our forests as being green and healthy stands of trees, but, unfortunately, today, when you look at these forests, millions of acres, millions and millions of acres within the U.S. Forest Service are actually diseased, dying, bug-infested trees.

I had the opportunity to meet with the chief of the Forest Service just last week, and he said that he estimated 80 million out of the 198 million acres that the U.S. Forest Service owns needs treatment.

The Forest Service has warned us for years that the forests are in terrible shape. It is really a result of decades of overregulation and frivolous lawsuits that have hindered forest management, and we are paying the price.

I represent the Colville National Forest which is about a million-acre forest. It is really the engine of our economy in the Northwest. Because what happens in the Colville National Forest determines whether or not we have Vaagen Brothers Lumber, or 49 Degrees North Ski & Snowboard Resort, or the biomass facility that Avista runs, converting wood waste into electricity.

This is all providing jobs, energy, recreational opportunities, yet mills have been closed, and jobs have been lost. It is unacceptable. It is time to pass the Resilient Federal Forests Act legislation.

□ 1315

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the good gentlewoman from Washington State for her remarks.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington has 3¼ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, I just want to quickly show this is an example of some of the fire damage. If you can see that, this is from the Carlton Complex Fire that happened 3 years ago in my district in central Washington, taken just yesterday.

The Carlton Complex burned through State, private, and Federal lands. So you can see that these dead, fire-damaged trees have not been logged, they have not been removed, and what they do is provide the kindling for the next catastrophic fire.

So that is what we are talking about here, not disarming local communities but actually arming them and giving them the ability and the tools that they need in order to prevent these catastrophic fires.

I would invite the good gentleman from Florida to come with me to witness firsthand the devastation and the potential devastation that we have and to really understand the nature of the issue. I would reciprocate with a visit to his State to see the damage done by the devastating hurricanes as well.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I advise my friend that I am prepared to close. I have no additional speakers, and I will go forward with your permission.

In the wake of the worst wildfires, as have been mentioned here by so many

of our colleagues, that the U.S. has experienced in quite a while, House Republicans, however, have responded by bringing to the floor, really, a tired bill passed last Congress that went nowhere in the Senate, a bill that does not fix the true problem of chronically underfunding wildfire prevention but, instead, doubles down in creating an unworkable system for wildfire suppression funding, a bill that rolls back environmental protection and limits access to the courts.

It is dismaying to see the response to natural disasters in this country hinge on the same thing so many other important debates do: partisanship and ignoring facts and science.

Despite a year in which we have seen historic hurricanes and wildfires, my Republican colleagues have yet again resorted to continuing to push policies that repeal environmental regulations, all the while denying the effects climate change is having on our communities and our country's economy.

My friend from Oregon, a moment ago—and he is my friend—spoke about the thunderstorms that we receive in Florida. In his version, it is accompanied by rain, and that is true a lot. But we, too, have droughts in Florida, and Florida is known as the lightning capital of the world. Very occasionally, particularly in central Florida and in the Everglades, those lightning strikes produce wildfires in the congressional district that I serve and many others. Our response to these events needs to improve, and it needs to happen quickly.

These disasters do not recognize congressional districts. These disasters do not target one area of our country over another and do not care about Republican or Democratic partisan gamesmanship. If we are going to adequately respond to the needs of millions of American citizens in the wake of these and future storms and future wildfires, we need to be advocating for sound policies based on science. This is the only way to protect future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a ''no'' vote on the rule and the underlying legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the newspaper article from the Methow Valley News, dated October 27.

[From the Methow Valley News, Oct. 27, 2017]

SMOKE IS A YEAR-ROUND PROBLEM IN THE VALLEY

(By Ann McCreary)

Autumn in the Methow Valley brings cool, crisp weather, bright days and colorful foliage. And smoke. Just like every other season of the year.

The Methow Valley's clean, clear air—one of its key attractions—is anything but clean and clear for extended periods of the year. In fact, the Methow Valley has four seasons of smoke, said Liz Walker, head of the Methow Valley Clean Air Project.

And it is not insignificant amounts of smoke, Walker said. Air pollution in Twisp is among the worst in the state, based on data from the Washington Department of Ecology.

Each season in the Methow Valley brings its own source of air pollution. In recent years, the all-too-familiar pall of wildfire smoke has hung over the valley for days or weeks during summer. As wildfires are put out by cooler, wet weather of fall, the valley enters another phase of smoke produced by prescribed burning in national forests, outdoor burn piles and wood stoves for home heating.

In spring, prescribed burning begins again, as well as more burn piles. ''Maybe a respite in June and early July, and then wildfire season will be upon us,'' Walker said.

Although wildfire season can bring health-threatening amounts of smoke to the valley, like last summer's Diamond Creek Fire, poor air quality is a real concern in winter as well, Walker said. ''We're susceptible to inversions and stagnation in the winter months'' that trap wood stove smoke on the valley floor, she said.

Smoke is the air pollutant of greatest concern in the Methow Valley, and is monitored by the Department of Ecology. It is known as PM2.5, which means particulate matter that is 2.5 microns or smaller. These tiny particles are most frequently caused by incomplete combustion, and can stay airborne and can travel long distances, increasing the likelihood that humans and animals will inhale them.

Data collected by a Department of Ecology air monitor in Twisp ranked air quality at that site among the eight most-polluted places in the state in 2016, Walker said. ''By several of the measures the Department of Ecology uses to look at PM2.5 pollution reported at air quality monitors across the state, Twisp ranks among the worst in air pollution—worse than metro Seattle or Tacoma. This is even after PM2.5 from wildfire smoke is subtracted out,'' Walker said.

There was insufficient data from the air pollution monitor in Winthrop to assess air quality there last year, ''but it is typically only slightly better than Twisp,'' Walker said.

PUBLIC COST

''Our valley cares a lot about this, and we're working together to improve it. There's a real public health cost to air pollution. Anyone who has sat around a campfire, or gone for a strenuous hike on a smoky day has had a firsthand lesson in the toxicity of smoke,'' Walker said.

Walker's concern about health impacts come from her training as an environmental health toxicologist. Harmful effects range from the inability to exercise outdoors, to respiratory distress and infections, to increased risk of cancer.

''For vulnerable populations—babies, children, pregnant women, elders, and anyone with heart or lung issues—bad air days can mean serious health repercussions. For everyone, chronic exposure to high levels of PM2.5 can potentially trigger or exacerbate conditions such as headaches, asthma, bronchitis and cardiovascular disease.''

There are economic costs of air pollution in the Methow Valley as well, she said. ''We're a tourist economy, dependent on the natural beauty of the valley,'' Walker said.

The Methow Valley Clean Air Project was launched in 2015 by Raleigh Bowden, a local physician, after she saw people suffering health effects of poor winter air quality, Walker said. A key goal of the project is improving air quality during the home heating season, October through March.

''Due to our valley's frequent winter inversions, smoke from woodstoves and outdoor burning pollutes our air to frequently unhealthy levels,'' Walker said. ''We've focused on the home heating season because this is when we can make behavioral changes to improve our air quality. This is a controllable source of pollution, as contrasted with pollution from wildfires.''

The Clean Air Project outlines measures residents can take to reduce pollution from wood stoves, including: Properly season wood so that it is dry and burns cleaner; clean chimneys yearly; build small, hot fires and don't damp them down; comply with burn bans; upgrade to certified stoves or a wood-burning alternative; weatherize homes.

The organization is also working to reduce outdoor burning of yard waste and provide alternatives, including ''vegetation drives'' sponsored by the Clean Air Project, Walker said.

SUCCESSFUL DRIVES

Vgetation drives, supported by grants and partnerships, were held in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, and another drive is scheduled next spring. Past drives have collected about 20 tons of vegetation, which prevented hundreds or thousands of hours of smoke, Walker said.

The yard waste was dropped off by residents and hauled to the county landfill during the first drive, conducted over two days. During the second drive, conducted over eight days in partnership with the Town of Twisp, residents delivered vegetation to a site near the Twisp wastewater treatment plant, where it was chipped and offered free for landscaping and mulching.

''The most unusual community participant brought his load strapped to the back of his bicycle—now that's commitment to clean air!'' Walker said.

The Clean Air Project also partnered this year with the Pine Forest Homeowners Association to provide support for chipping branches and slash created when underbrush and trees were thinned and limbed as part of Pine Forest's ongoing Firewise efforts. The debris would otherwise have been burned.

Next spring's vegetation drive will be conducted in partnership with the Okanogan Conservation District, Walker said. She suggested that residents who have been accumulating yard waste cover their piles this fall instead of burning them, and haul them to the vegetation drive in the spring to be chipped.

Walker acknowledged that it takes extra effort, and a different mindset, to participate in a vegetation drive rather than burn yard waste. ''It's hard. Our valley is long. It requires a truck, loading it up and hauling it in,'' she said. ''People have been outdoor burning in the valley forever. It's how you get rid of your stuff when you live out in the country.''

However, Walker said, many valley residents have been supportive of the vegetation drives. ''People really appreciate this as an option. They don't want to impact the health of families and the community,'' she said.

For people who want to continue the longstanding local tradition of burning yard waste, the Clean Air Project suggests ''best practices for burning outdoors in the most safe and clean way,'' Walker said.

''Make sure the pile is as bone dry as possible. Make sure you know what is a good day, with good ventilation, but not too much wind. We've interacted with Fire District 6 and smokejumpers. There are lots of folks with tons of knowledge about how to build a hot, clean pile,'' she said.

The Clean Air Project is overseen by a volunteer advisory group. The Methow Valley Citizens' Council is fiscal sponsor for the organization. More information is available on the Methow Valley Clean Air Project Facebook page.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Florida for today's debate.

The issue of proactive management of our Nation's Federal forests is critically important to the future and economic well-being of our whole country as well as to the health of our Federal lands and safety of our rural communities.

Let me say that, if you have never been through a rural community that has had to face the devastation of a catastrophic fire, you are welcome to come to the State of Washington and see firsthand exactly the kind of damage that these fires can do.

This is of the highest priority, and I urge all my colleagues to support this rule as well as the underlying bill in order to combat these catastrophic wildfires and reform the way in which we manage our forests.

This rule provides for consideration of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. This is bipartisan, it is comprehensive, and it aims at addressing the disastrous consequences of catastrophic wildfires by utilizing the tools the Forest Service and other agencies have to reduce the threats posed by these fires, by insects, by disease infestation, and by dangerous old forest overgrowth.

As I said, my district in central Washington and millions of acres across our great country continue to face this threat. We must take steps to prevent and address these fires, which this bill will do by reforming the way we prepare for, respond to, and fund wildfire response and mitigation efforts. These threats will only continue to worsen not only for my constituents, but for people all around the country.

We are recognizing sustained drought conditions. Mismanagement and failure to conduct maintenance of our forests on Federal lands will continue to plague this issue. The underlying legislation is essential and desperately needed to change the outdated, unsustainable, and untimely dangerous system of Federal forest management on these lands.

Mr. Speaker, this is a straightforward rule allowing for consideration of a critical piece of legislation that will help protect our rural communities and ensure we are prepared to respond to these devastating, catastrophic fires.

I appreciate the discussion we have had today. I believe that this is a critical measure, and I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 595 and the underlying legislation.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 595 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS

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

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3440) to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain individuals who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 3. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 3440.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 232, nays 184, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 592]

YEAS—232

Abraham	Chabot	Flores
Aderholt	Cheney	Fortenberry
Allen	Coffman	Foxx
Amash	Cole	Franks (AZ)
Amodei	Collins (GA)	Frelinghuysen
Arrington	Collins (NY)	Gaetz
Babin	Comer	Gallagher
Bacon	Comstock	Garrett
Banks (IN)	Conaway	Gianforte
Barletta	Cook	Gibbs
Barr	Costello (PA)	Gohmert
Barton	Cramer	Goodlatte
Bergman	Crawford	Gosar
Biggs	Culberson	Gowdy
Bilirakis	Curbelo (FL)	Granger
Bishop (MI)	Davidson	Graves (GA)
Bishop (UT)	Davis, Rodney	Graves (LA)
Black	Denham	Graves (MO)
Blackburn	Dent	Griffith
Blum	DeSantis	Grothman
Bost	Diaz-Balart	Guthrie
Brady (TX)	Donovan	Handel
Brat	Duffy	Harper
Brooks (IN)	Duncan (SC)	Harris
Buchanan	Duncan (TN)	Hartzler
Buck	Dunn	Hensarling
Bucshon	Emmer	Herrera Beutler
Budd	Estes (KS)	Hice, Jody B.
Burgess	Farenthold	Higgins (LA)
Byrne	Faso	Holding
Calvert	Ferguson	Hollingsworth
Carter (GA)	Fitzpatrick	Hudson
Carter (TX)	Fleischmann	Huizenga

Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—184

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—16

Barragán
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Clyburn
Cummings
DeGette
DesJarlais
Garamendi
Gomez
Hill
Jackson Lee
Nadler
Perry
Pocan
Polis
Smith (NE)

□ 1345

Messrs. BROWN of Maryland and LARSON of Connecticut changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 232, noes 184, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 593]

AYES—232

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—184

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—16

Barragán	DeGette	Perry
Bridenstine	DesJarlais	Pocan
Brooks (AL)	Garamendi	Polis
Clyburn	Gomez	Smith (NE)
Collins (NY)	Hill	
Cummings	Nadler	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1353

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" on rollcall No. 592, and "Yea" on rollcall No. 593.

MAKING IN ORDER CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 599

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time to consider H. Res. 599 in the House, if called up by the chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or his designee; that the resolution be considered as read; that the previous question be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except for 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by Representative ROYCE of California and Representative KHANNA of California or their respective designees; and that notwithstanding any previous order of the House, the provisions of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution, 50 U.S.C. 1546, shall not apply to H. Con. Res. 81.

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

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained with constituents when rollcall vote No. 592 was cast on the floor of the House, the motion on ordering the previous question on the rule. If I had been present, I would have voted "no."

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 1, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on November 1, 2017, at 11:44 a.m.:

Appointments:

Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

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

ENCOURAGING PUBLIC OFFERINGS ACT OF 2017

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3903) to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to expand the ability to use testing the waters and confidential draft registration submissions, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3903

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Encouraging Public Offerings Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. EXPANDING TESTING THE WATERS AND CONFIDENTIAL SUBMISSIONS.

The Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77a et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 5(d)—

(A) by striking "Notwithstanding" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding";

(B) by striking "an emerging growth company or any person authorized to act on behalf of an emerging growth company" and inserting "an issuer or any person authorized to act on behalf of an issuer"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may issue regulations, subject to public notice and comment, to impose such other terms, conditions, or requirements on the engaging in oral or written communications described under paragraph (1) by an issuer other than an emerging growth company as the Commission determines appropriate.

"(B) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Prior to any rulemaking described under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall issue a report to the Congress containing a list of the findings supporting the basis of such rulemaking."; and

(2) in section 6(e)—

(A) in the heading, by striking "EMERGING GROWTH COMPANIES" and inserting "DRAFT REGISTRATION STATEMENTS";

(B) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4); and

(C) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

"(1) PRIOR TO INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING.—Any issuer, prior to its initial public offering date, may confidentially submit to the Commission a draft registration statement, for confidential nonpublic review by the staff of the Commission prior to public filing, provided that the initial confidential submission and all amendments thereto shall be publicly filed with the Commission not later than 15 days before the date on which the issuer conducts a road show (as defined under section 230.433(h)(4) of title 17, Code of Federal Regulations) or, in the absence of a road show, at least 15 days prior to the requested effective date of the registration statement.

"(2) WITHIN ONE YEAR AFTER INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING OR EXCHANGE REGISTRATION.—Any issuer, within the one-year period following its initial public offering or its registration of a security under section 12(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, may confidentially submit to the Commission a draft registration statement, for confidential nonpublic review by the staff of the Commission prior to public filing, provided that the initial confidential submission and all amendments thereto shall be publicly filed with the Commission not later than 15 days before the date on which the issuer conducts a road show (as defined under section 230.433(h)(4) of title 17, Code of Federal Regulations) or, in the absence of a road show, at least 15 days prior to the requested effective date of the registration statement.

"(3) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may issue regulations, subject to public notice and comment, to impose such other terms, conditions, or requirements on the submission of draft registration statements described under this subsection by an issuer other than an emerging growth company as the Commission determines appropriate.

"(B) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Prior to any rulemaking described under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall issue a report to the Congress containing a list of the findings supporting the basis of such rulemaking.".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

□ 1400

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, over the last two decades, our Nation has experienced a 37 percent decline in the number of U.S. listed companies—public companies. Equally troubling, we have seen the number of publicly traded companies fall to around 5,700. These statistics are concerning because they are similar to the data we saw in the 1980s when our economy was less than half its current size.

Mr. Speaker, since 2000, the average number of initial public offerings, or IPOs, has fallen to approximately 135 per year, which pales in comparison to the more than 450 IPOs filed per year in

the early 1990s. Notably, there has not been a corresponding downward trend in the creation of new companies over that same period. This demonstrates that the regulatory costs associated with going public is deterring new and emerging companies from making the decision to go public.

Now, you may ask: Why is this important?

Well, first of all, it is preventing our capital markets from reaching their full potential, which sounds very academic and pie in the sky.

What does that mean, though?

What it really means is that it is not allowing Mr. and Mrs. 401(k) from participating in the economic successes that we have seen lately.

Federal securities regulations are typically written for large public companies, and this one-size-fits-all framework imposes a disproportionate burden on small and emerging companies looking to go public.

The 2012 Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act, or JOBS Act, which was a bipartisan bill signed into law by President Obama, created a new type of issue called an emerging growth company, which allowed these so-called EGCs with less than $1 billion in revenue to be allowed to communicate with potential investors before an initial public offering and file confidential draft registration statements with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

On June 29, 2017, the SEC extended to all companies the option of submitting in advance draft registration statements for IPOs and follow-on offerings within 1 year of an IPO.

H.R. 3903, the Encouraging Public Offerings Act, would ensure that all issues making an IPO would be allowed to communicate with potential investors before an offering and file confidential draft registration statements with the Securities and Exchange Commission. In other words, we are going to codify what the Securities and Exchange Commission has said we should be doing.

H.R. 3903 simply codifies that practice into law and it will allow these companies to finalize their registration documents without undue expectations from outside influences, and it allows companies to time their offering with the market before making their Form S–1s public and beginning an investor road show.

I commend the bipartisan work of Representatives BUDD and MEEKS on this important bill to ensure that H.R. 3903 applies to all companies, without losing valuable investor protections—a key element in this.

This bill will also help encourage companies to go public, and I encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3903.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3903. This bill will expand the ability of companies to test the waters prior to going public and to submit confidential filings for feedback from the SEC staff prior to filing of an IPO.

The JOBS Act of 2012 created these mechanisms for emerging growth companies. Emerging growth companies are those with less than $1 billion in revenue, $700 million in public float, and $1 billion in nonconvertible debt. The JOBS Act enabled these companies to speak to institutional investors prior to an IPO without it being considered an unregistered offering for sale of securities.

The definition of a securities offering is appropriately broad to protect investors and ensure transparency in our markets by requiring registration and significant disclosures. However, companies considering a public offering should be able to talk to the most sophisticated investors in the markets, large institutional investors, to gauge the interest in the offering. Having that ability will help encourage public offerings because it enables companies to realize efficiencies in assessing demand.

Research-intensive firms are more likely to test the waters because it lowers the cost of proprietary disclosure. These are the firms that drive economic growth by bringing new ideas to market.

Research is obviously a passion of mine, having founded a company that was based on my intellectual property and subsequently designing particle accelerators as a physicist at Fermi National Lab. It is the new ideas that grow our GDP and improve the standard of living for all Americans.

Moreover, new businesses with new ideas do more to grow the economy than incumbents with new ideas or just acquisitions. The public market presents an opportunity for small businesses to become big businesses without being bought out.

Additionally, this bill would allow companies of all sizes to file confidentially forms with the SEC. This allows the firm to receive feedback without making inappropriate or unrequired information public. Disclosing the correct information helps the markets understand risks and price an offering appropriately.

The bill also includes a provision giving the SEC discretion to ensure that these mechanisms are used in a way that benefits markets and investors. The U.S. capital markets are the deepest and most liquid in the world, and this bill will help more companies tap into that capital and grow our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge broad support for this bill today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), the sponsor of this very important legislation.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Encouraging Public Offerings Act, a bill that the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and I have worked on together, and I thank him for that.

I also thank the Financial Services Committee, in particular, the staff and the subcommittee chairman, Mr. HUIZENGA.

I also thank the chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING). His leadership of this committee and his devotion and fidelity to the conservative principles are legendary. His retirement will be a great loss to this institution. The Hensarling legacy of conservative leadership will not be forgotten, and I am certain that his next chapter will be as great as this one. He will be missed by all, especially by those of us—myself among them—who share his vision and his limited government principles.

Mr. Speaker, no other country has a better history of connecting money with vision than the United States of America. We rightfully celebrate our legendary entrepreneurs: Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Andrew Carnegie, Tom Davis, John Rockefeller, and a whole host of others who built the companies that drive our economy. None of those men could have done what they did without capital. None of them could have done what they did without intermediaries to connect that capital to their vision.

So, Mr. Speaker, the depressing truth is that our capital markets are the biggest, strongest, and most transparent connectors between money and vision, and they are not where they once were. We have the same number of public offerings on our stock exchanges that we did in the 1980s, when the economy was much smaller. We have lost 50 percent of our public companies since the 1990s, and more and more companies choose to go private, or they never even sell their shares to the public.

The hope is that, with this bill, we will increase the desire of companies to go public, getting our financial markets back to being the number one method for capital formation. To that end, our bill does three things:

First, it allows the companies to file their paperwork for going public with the SEC confidentially. That way, if there is an error or a discrepancy in the documents, the company can work it out with the agency without getting embarrassed in public or exposing information to competitors.

Second, it allows all companies to confidentially file their paperwork for a second stock sale after an initial public offering. Again, the point being to allow for a dialogue between the company and the regulator.

Third, it also allows all companies considering an IPO to talk to sophisticated investors and qualified institutions and see if these investors might want to buy their stock before offering it to the public, which is called ''testing the waters.'' It is hard to know if

you should sell a product if you can't check and see if there is anyone out there who even wants to buy it.

Mr. Speaker, these changes to the securities laws have received broad support. I want to quote the SEC chairman on this when he spoke at a hearing in our committee. He said: ''The initial data is positive. Not just people using it, but people saying, Thank you, we intend to use it. Both from an IPO perspective, but also from the perspective on follow-on offerings that occur in the first year . . . if there is any adverse views, I'd like to hear them. We haven't heard any.''

The Center for American Progress, which has not traditionally been friendly to relaxing financial regulations, has said that these reforms, which were made available to smaller companies in the JOBS Act, were some of the most successful provisions in that law. This bill applies them to all companies, not just those with a certain amount of revenue.

Finally, the Treasury Department gave favorable mention to these reforms in its report on the capital markets earlier this year. This bill passed out of the House Financial Services Committee with unanimous support.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers on public companies are clear. We have a problem. The experts are clear that the changes in the Budd-Meeks bill would be a positive step towards fixing the problem. Similar bipartisan reforms have seen great success in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, first off, reiterate my support of this bill. It is the sort of commonsense, bipartisan fix that will make an incremental improvement to our public markets.

However, I would also like to emphasize what I believe is the real threat to the health of our public markets, which is the concentration of wealth at the very top. It is no secret that the competition to our public markets are private equity and venture capital, and these are investment instruments largely, almost entirely, under the control of the very wealthy.

We are, this week, going to begin debate on a tax bill that will decide, to a large extent, whether we accelerate or decelerate the concentration of wealth at the very top. I just want to emphasize that connection to make everyone understand that the continued health of our public markets, which historically have been such an important contributor to middle class investment in growing businesses. So I want people to consider that as we debate this bill, which I fully support, and, as well, the variety of important issues that we debate that really affect the distribution of wealth in this country.

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

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, access to capital is crucial to promoting a thriving U.S. economy. It allows companies to invest in growth and to develop new and innovative products and services. Historically, companies seeking a considerable amount of capital have preferred to use an initial public offering and have shares traded on a national securities exchange.

However, the United States has experienced a 37 percent decline in the number of U.S. listed public companies, which is considerably lower than in the 1980s and 1990s.

Public company compliance costs have grown sufficiently large that many smaller firms stay private rather than spend their profit overcoming these regulatory burdens. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the Dodd-Frank Act, and other legislative and regulatory actions have contributed to these costs.

□ 1415

Title I of the JOBS Act created a new category of issuers known as emerging growth companies, or EGCs. These issuers must have less than $1 billion in annual revenue or $700,000 million in public float when they register with the SEC.

While the JOBS Act made it easier for companies to go public, it was not enough to overcome capital formation obstacles entrepreneurs and small businesses are facing.

H.R. 3903, the Encouraging Public Offerings Act of 2017, would allow any company, regardless of size or EGC status, to take advantage of the popular provisions of title I of the 2012 JOBS Act.

Title I of the JOBS Act has proven to be a real policy success, and Congress and the SEC should continue to advance policy that will reduce or eliminate barriers to economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Mr. BUDD and Mr. MEEKS for their work on this important piece of legislation. I appreciate our chairman, Mr. HUIZENGA, for moving it expeditiously through our committee; and our chairman, Mr. HENSARLING, for presiding over it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I yielded myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, we know that trillions of dollars are invested in our economy through IRAs, 401(k)s, and other investment tools. However, these companies need to be publicly traded for Joe and Jane IRA or Mr. and Mrs. 401(k) to even be able to have the opportunity to invest in them. That is what this bill is trying to do.

This bill is trying to make sure that those emerging companies, those small startup kind of companies, who may be very innovative or, frankly, might be even more mundane, but they are small and they are looking to grow, that they have an opportunity to do so.

Who benefits? Everyone. Everyone is going to be able to take a much more broad view of how they are going to invest their hard-earned dollars that they have worked so long and hard for.

Mr. Speaker, this is also, I believe, an important aspect, because we know that economic growth comes from small- and medium-sized businesses. That is where we are going to see really the engine of our economy rev up.

It is maybe not as much of a headline grabber as some of those big companies adding 100 or 200 or even thousands of jobs, but all of those smaller companies adding people into the workforce add up to far larger numbers than those numbers are.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3903, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3903, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

FAIR INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL EXPERTS ACT

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1585) to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to codify certain qualifications of individuals as accredited investors for purposes of the securities laws, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1585

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Fair Investment Opportunities for Professional Experts Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF ACCREDITED INVESTOR.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2(a)(15) of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77b(a)(15) is amended—

(1) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subparagraphs (A) and (F), respectively; and

(2) in subparagraph (A) (as so redesignated), by striking ''; or'' and inserting a semicolon, and inserting after such subparagraph the following:

''(B) any natural person whose individual net worth, or joint net worth with that person's spouse, exceeds $1,000,000 (which amount, along with the amounts set forth in subparagraph (C), shall be adjusted for inflation by the Commission every 5 years to the nearest $10,000 to reflect the change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) where, for purposes of calculating net worth under this subparagraph—

''(i) the person's primary residence shall not be included as an asset;

''(ii) indebtedness that is secured by the person's primary residence, up to the estimated fair market value of the primary residence at the time of the sale of securities, shall not be included as a liability (except that if the amount of such indebtedness outstanding at the time of sale of securities exceeds the amount outstanding 60 days before such time, other than as a result of the acquisition of the primary residence, the amount of such excess shall be included as a liability); and

''(iii) indebtedness that is secured by the person's primary residence in excess of the estimated fair market value of the primary residence at the time of the sale of securities shall be included as a liability;

''(C) any natural person who had an individual income in excess of $200,000 in each of the 2 most recent years or joint income with that person's spouse in excess of $300,000 in each of those years and has a reasonable expectation of reaching the same income level in the current year;

''(D) any natural person who is currently licensed or registered as a broker or investment adviser by the Commission, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or an equivalent self-regulatory organization (as defined in section 3(a)(26) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934), or the securities division of a State or the equivalent State division responsible for licensing or registration of individuals in connection with securities activities;

''(E) any natural person the Commission determines, by regulation, to have demonstrable education or job experience to qualify such person as having professional knowledge of a subject related to a particular investment, and whose education or job experience is verified by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority or an equivalent self-regulatory organization (as defined in section 3(a)(26) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934); or''.

(b) RULEMAKING.—The Commission shall revise the definition of accredited investor under Regulation D (17 C.F.R. 230.501 et seq.) to conform with the amendments made by subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and emerging companies are what drive the American economy. We meet them in our districts and see firsthand the benefits that their dreams, their innovations, and their hard work provide to our constituents and to our communities.

These innovators, entrepreneurs, and risk takers are critical to our country's economic growth and prosperity. In fact, small businesses are responsible for more than 60 percent of the Nation's net new jobs over the past two decades. Sixty percent of all of the new jobs over the past two decades come from these small emerging companies. Their ability to raise capital in the private markets is critical to the economic well-being of the United States.

So if our Nation is going to have an economy that provides opportunities for every American, then we must promote and encourage the success and growth of our small businesses and our startups. It is this notion that brings us to this legislation that we are discussing today.

Under current law, accredited investors are allowed to purchase securities that haven't been registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. These types of offerings carry more risks than public offerings. The thought is that individuals with enough financial sophistication or net worth can bear the potential losses that may be associated with these types of securities.

How the law works today is that this definition of an accredited investor is solely based on wealth.

The ability to participate in a private offering should not be limited to individuals that pass some type of Federal Government assets test. Instead, the ability to participate should be expanded to include all individuals who demonstrate that they have sufficient understanding of the offering. That may be a doctor who has gone through the training and has an idea that a new piece of equipment might work for them; or a scientist who has done research in the lab who says: You know what, this makes sense to me, and they understand the risk that they are entering into.

Well, H.R. 1585, the Fair Investment Opportunities for Professional Experts Act, introduced by Representative SCHWEIKERT and Representative HILL, will expand the definition of an accredited investor in a way that will appropriately increase the pool of potential investors, thereby providing additional investment opportunities for more Americans and enabling the businesses they invest in to create more jobs.

The expansion of the accredited investor definition will enhance the ability of many companies, particularly small and emerging companies and businesses, to raise capital and grow by increasing the pool of potential investors. These are investors, again, that are very knowledgeable about that particular area.

This will both provide greater investment opportunities for more Americans and will enable these businesses to begin investing to create more jobs.

H.R. 1585 is a bipartisan bill that will help create jobs and a healthier economy. The bill provides Americans with more investment opportunities and enhances small companies' ability to raise capital.

This legislation overwhelmingly passed the Financial Services Committee by a bipartisan vote of 58–2, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this particular bill today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1585. This bill will expand the definition of accredited investor, a status reserved for investors who possess the sophistication and financial means necessary to invest in private securities offerings.

Currently, accredited investors are limited to persons who have an annual income more than $200,000, or $300,000 together with a spouse, or a net worth in excess of $1 million, excluding a primary residence.

Aside from the primary residence exclusion added by the Dodd-Frank Act, the accredited investor definition has not been updated since 1982.

In light of the growth of private markets and increasing complexity, the SEC's Investor Advisory Committee recommended that the SEC conduct additional study of adjusting the current thresholds for inflation and establishing alternatives based on existing credentials, investment experience, and limits of investments.

An updated definition is long overdue. Current law speaks almost exclusively to the ability to bear a loss rather than the sophistication of the investor.

The bill we consider today is the product of bipartisan compromise. Last Congress, it was significantly narrowed to include only persons who qualify based on current income and net worth tests: registered brokers, and investment advisers, and those who have the appropriate educational background and job experience as determined by the SEC and verified by FINRA.

These categories are in line with the recommendations of the Investor Advisory Committee and effective proxies for sophistication, access to information, and ability to withstand losses.

There is an inherent tension between democratizing markets and protecting investors on the basis of their ability to bear financial losses.

This bill includes Ranking Member WATERS' bipartisan amendment to require the SEC to adjust net worth and income thresholds for inflation every 5 years. This will establish the economic value of the thresholds in current law, as the dollar amounts are increased, with growth in the overall economy and changes in the value of the dollar.

Doing so will preserve access to private markets for those currently investing in them. Private offerings can offer some of the best returns in the market, but they obviously carry different risks, like illiquidity, than securities in the public markets.

While there can be investment opportunities that significantly increase a person's net worth, they cannot be immediately sold if an investor's financial circumstances change.

So this bill strikes a good compromise between giving access to investments without exposing the retirement accounts of working families to excessive risks.

Mr. Speaker, I urge broad support for the bill today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HUIZENGA for yielding me time.

A little bit of history: this piece of legislation, the underlying idea, actually was fostered a few years ago. One of my closest friends in Arizona, Lakshmi, is freaky smart, electrical engineer, off the charts IQ. He and I were having a conversation about a company that he was really interested in that had been started by a handful of his old friends.

Well, it turns out his old friends had gone through all this process, and he had just sort of been watching what they were doing.

Now, Lakshmi is an absolute expert on the technology that these gentlemen are putting together, but because of a series of timing and other things, he was walled off from investing in a company that was using a technology he was an absolute expert in, because he didn't meet the accredited investor standards. He didn't have the million dollars in the bank.

His argument to me was, should his knowledge on a company and its product, their risk profile, its opportunity to succeed and its potential failure in the marketplace be based on his bank account, or should it be based on his knowledge?

Now, the legislation has gone through a couple generations of compromise. I personally preferred the original bill, a bit more expansive, but this is a good thing, because for our brothers and sisters on both sides of the aisle here, I think we are embracing this concept that we all care about the curve where we are seeing the wealthy getting wealthier in the United States and much of our hardworking middle holding sort of flat.

This is one of the reasons: we have created these definitions where accredited investors, I think only, like, 600-some-thousand people, have gone through the process to hold that designation in our society, meaning it is a tiny sliver of our society that is allowed to invest in these types of businesses.

We have a bureaucracy that for how many years now the regulator has said: Your ability to invest in these types of organizations is based on your bank account.

Today, we take the sort of first step on a bipartisan basis to say: Yes, bank account is one, but how about your risk tolerance, your knowledge, your expertise, and your understanding that many of these fail, and many of these businesses become amazing successes, but are you able to process both the technology, the risk, and the information?

For many of us, we are hoping that the opportunity to be part of the investor class starts to become much more egalitarian across our society instead of just being the hallmark of the ultrawealthy in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. HUIZENGA for giving me a moment and for moving this bill forward.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that I appreciate my colleague's heartfelt concern for the difficulty of the wealth piling up in the top of our country.

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

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), a member of the Financial Services Committee and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

□ 1430

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the Fair Investment Opportunities for Professional Experts Act. This is a bipartisan bill. It expands economic opportunities for many, many Americans because, to date, only an individual's wealth has been taken into consideration when defining whether he meets the qualifications or she meets the qualifications of an accredited investor under our securities laws. The simple fix proposed by this bill will empower those with financial expertise and those with experience to join the ranks of those who can invest in private, high-growth companies.

It was explained very eloquently here by the bill's author, and I think that this commonplace change is going to broaden the pool of startup capital. That is going to help companies looking to grow, companies looking to add jobs.

At the same time, it provides an investment opportunity, one with greater upside and more risk, to those previously locked out of the private placement market. This includes many educated young Americans who have not yet had time to grow their pocketbooks but do have the expertise in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I have seen firsthand that the entrepreneurial spirit is certainly alive and well in California and all across this country, and this bill before us today ensures that more Americans can participate in both the risk and reward of the startup economy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 1585.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1585 does one of the things that most of us came to Congress to do: solve problems and change laws.

The current law excludes most of America from participating in one of the most dynamic parts of our economy, which is private placement investment into small startup companies or, sometimes, very big companies but they are not yet publicly traded. There are opportunities all over to do this, but there are only a small number of Americans who can make the investment.

For many smaller companies, they are faced with a dilemma. One option is no option. They may not have the network of prospective high net worth, accredited investors who can take a look at the kind of capital that would help that company become a thriving larger company, that would help grow the companies that drive the growth in our economy.

As investors, there are people who work in the investment industry who are doing the underwriting—charter financial analysts, for example. Whether they are working for a private equity group, they are doing the work but don't yet have the high net worth. They have true domain expertise.

Imagine the skilled labor who is actually doing the technology implementation, who knows exactly everything that it would take in a program to make a program be the winner in the marketplace but is also well informed on the rest of the risks, has been well educated on the market, and he is prevented from participating.

This act is a step in the right direction. I hope we can accomplish more together. I am confident we will see great success if we can pass this and build on it by taking a bigger bite at the apple soon.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues Mr. SCHWEIKERT for offering the bill, Mr. HILL for getting it through, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. HUIZENGA, but I also want to thank my colleagues because it is really nice to see something go through unanimously in our committee.

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

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, very quickly, just to recap, 60 percent of all job growth over the past two decades has come from small and emerging companies. This bill today recognizes that and encourages more of that to happen. It allows knowledgeable but maybe not wealthy folks to invest in areas of their expertise. In an era of crowdfunding and fund-me pages and those types of capital raises and investing, this bill makes sense. As the gentleman from Ohio, my friend Mr. DAVIDSON, pointed out, it came through the committee unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all like to point out that Congress can work together across party lines and have some common goals that can be achieved and recognized, and this is one of those bills. I am very pleased to have such broad support.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage continued support for this bill, H.R. 1585, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1585, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HELIUM EXTRACTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3279) to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to provide that extraction of helium from gas produced under a Federal mineral lease shall maintain the lease as if the helium were oil and gas.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3279

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Helium Extraction Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. MAINTENANCE OF FEDERAL MINERAL LEASES BASED ON EXTRACTION OF HELIUM.

The first section of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181) is amended in the fifth paragraph by inserting after ''purchaser thereof'' the following: '', and that extraction of helium from gas produced from such lands shall maintain the lease as if the extracted helium were oil and gas''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3279, the Helium Extraction Act of 2017. This straightforward piece of legislation will incentivize helium production on Federal lands, help ensure the future of America's helium supply, and provide a fair return to the taxpayer.

Under existing law, the Mineral Leasing Act only permits helium extraction as a by-product of an existing oil or natural gas lease. As a result, if oil and gas production on a Federal site is not economically viable, the lease will expire, regardless of the revenue brought in by helium sales. The Helium Extraction Act of 2017 would correct this error and authorize helium production activities where economically viable.

Helium is used for much more than balloons. It is a rare and unique element which has become an indispensable part of our medical, space, and defense industries, such as its use in MRI machines, semiconductors, and air-to-air missile guidance systems.

Unfortunately, the future of our domestic helium supply is uncertain. The Helium Stewardship Act of 2013, which details a commonsense privatization process of the Federal helium reserve, also specifies that all helium in the Federal reserve must be auctioned off by September 30, 2021, and the facility closed.

This crucial source of helium has been relied upon for almost half a century, but in a few short years, it will no longer be available. Our country needs another way to access this critical natural resource; otherwise, we will be relying on hostile interests such as Qatar, Algeria, and Russia. Each of these countries presents security and geopolitical challenges made even more apparent by recent unrest among Qatar and its regional neighbors.

Unless something changes, foreign facilities are predicted to become our chief source of helium by the end of the decade. This is why H.R. 3279 is such a necessary piece of legislation.

By authorizing the Bureau of Land Management to lease land for this valuable nonrenewable resource, this legislation will raise $9 million for the American taxpayer and help secure our supply of helium for years to come.

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

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

H.R. 3279 would correct a problem in our Federal oil and gas leasing laws that makes it more difficult for companies to commercially produce helium from Federal lands. Helium is a critical element for high-tech research and modern medicine, and because of its unique properties, there are simply no substitutes.

On the Natural Resources Committee, we have spent many years overseeing the Federal Helium Program, culminating in the bipartisan Helium Stewardship Act signed into law 4 years ago.

While the Helium Stewardship Act improved the management and sale of Federal helium, it didn't do much to promote the development of new sources of helium, which are in high demand. By allowing companies to hold onto Federal oil and gas leases if they are producing commercial quantities of helium and only helium, then the problem that kept potentially valuable helium resources under lock and key is resolved. This is only one small step, but it is a very useful one.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsor of this legislation for introducing it.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3279, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3279.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1445

REPEALING THE ACT TO CONFER JURISDICTION ON THE STATE OF IOWA OVER OFFENSES COMMITTED BY OR AGAINST INDIANS ON THE SAC AND FOX INDIAN RESERVATION

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1074) to repeal the Act entitled ''An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1074

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Act of June 30, 1948, entitled ''An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation'' (62 Stat. 1161, chapter 759) is repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1074. This bill would rescind criminal jurisdiction from the State of Iowa over crimes committed by or against members of the Sac and Fox Tribe on their lands. In doing so, the Tribe or the Federal Government would exercise exclusive jurisdiction under the Major Crimes Act. This is the most common legal situation for most tribes in America today.

In 1948, Congress granted jurisdiction over all crimes committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Reservation to the State of Iowa. In 1949, there was no mechanism in the Federal Government concerning criminal jurisdiction on the Tribe's land, and up until that point, the Tribe had largely policed themselves.

Today, the Federal Government has criminal statutory authority on Indian lands, the Tribe is again ready to police itself, and the State of Iowa has

agreed that its Federal grant of criminal jurisdiction can be repealed.

Accordingly, under H.R. 1074, the Federal Government will have criminal jurisdiction over crimes, especially major crimes, by or against Indians on the Tribe's lands. The Tribe would have jurisdiction over Indian offenders for crimes over which it exercises jurisdiction, and the State of Iowa would retain exclusive jurisdiction over crimes where both offender and victim are non-Indians.

I thank the sponsor of H.R. 1074, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM), for his work on this bill, and I urge adoption of the measure.

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

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

There are laws on the books that stand in the way of true tribal self-determination and self-governance. One of those laws is Public Law 80–846, known commonly as the 1948 Act. The 1948 Act targeted only one tribe, the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa, also known as the Meskwaki Nation, and gave the State of Iowa criminal jurisdiction over their tribal lands.

In 1948, the Nation did not have a formal mechanism for law enforcement and was not in a financial position to create one. This was used as the rationale for the stripping of these jurisdictional rights. But this has not been the case for many years. The Tribe has a full-time police department as well as a fully functioning court system.

The continued existence of the 1948 Act has resulted in an unfair system of crimes committed on Meskwaki land, whereby a Native-American defendant must face the possibility of two prosecutions, State and Tribal, but a non-Native defendant faces only State prosecution.

That is why I join my colleagues in supporting H.R. 1074. By passing this bill and repealing the 1948 Act, we will remove the inequity it has created, and bring the Meskwaki Nation in line with how criminal jurisdiction issues are addressed on other Native lands.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of H.R. 1074, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BLUM).

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding and for his time managing today's floor debate.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1074, a bill I first introduced in the 114th Congress, which would repeal a 1948 law that granted the State of Iowa criminal jurisdiction over offenses committed by or against members of the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa.

Prior to this 1948 law, the Tribe had largely policed itself, and there was little, if any, Federal law enforcement on the Tribe's land.

Historically, determining who may exercise jurisdiction over crime in tribal communities is complex. Generally, crimes committed by or against Indians in Indian Country are under the jurisdiction of the United States, pursuant to various Federal statutes. The 1948 Act was passed at a time when the Federal Government was attempting to shift its responsibility and obligations from tribes to the respective States.

In 1953, Congress passed a law, commonly called Public Law 280, transferring criminal jurisdiction over all crimes, regardless of the Indian status of the offender or victim, in Indian Country of six States from the Federal Government to those States. Even though Iowa was not one of those States, for years it has been treated as if it were a Public Law 280 State.

With respect to the law enforcement on the settlement today, a lot has changed since 1948. Today, the Tribe has a fully-functional criminal justice system, which includes a full-time police department whose officers are certified by the State of Iowa. The Tribe maintains and employs law-trained judges and a prosecutor who, together with a probation department, handle all criminal cases which arise on tribal lands.

H.R. 1074, and its Senate companion bill, have bipartisan support from the entire Iowa delegation, as well as the support of the Iowa State Legislature, which passed legislation signed by then-Governor Terry Branstad in April 2016, that began this process of conferring jurisdiction to the Tribe and the Department of Justice.

As my friend from California previously mentioned, the entirety of the Meskwaki Settlement is located in Tama County, Iowa, in my district. Since I have come to Washington, I have gotten to know the Sac and Fox Tribal Council and their representatives, and I was happy to first introduce this bill in 2016 after its approval by then-Governor Branstad.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this bill, and I hope it continues to move through the legislative process so that the Tribe may once again have jurisdiction over many of the crimes committed against their members on their land, and restore another portion of the Tribe's sovereignty, which has been removed since 1948.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1074.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONVEYANCE TO IOWA OF REVERSIONARY INTEREST HELD BY UNITED STATES IN CERTAIN LAND IN POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY, IOWA

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2600) to provide for the conveyance to the State of Iowa of the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2600

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

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF REVERSIONARY INTEREST REQUIRED.

(a) CONVEYANCE.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall convey, without consideration, to the State of Iowa the reversionary interest held by the United States and described in the quit claim deed dated April 13, 1998, instrument number 19170, as recorded in book 98, page 55015, in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

(b) COSTS.—As a condition of the conveyance under subsection (a), all costs associated with such conveyance shall be paid by the State of Iowa.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the State of Iowa should continue to provide information regarding the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the California National Historic Trail, and the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 2600, sponsored by my colleague, Representative DAVID YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 2600 directs the Department of the Interior to convey to the State of Iowa the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land in Pottawattamie County.

By the way, there is going to be a test afterwards on this pronunciation.

In 1989, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to provide for the development of a trails interpretive center in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Six years later, in 1995, the National Western Trails Center donated property to the Federal Government, and the National Park Service later constructed a trails center on the property to interpret the history of the Lewis and Clark

National Historic Trail, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, and the Oregon National Historic Trail.

In 1998, the Federal Government donated the trails center and surrounding property to the State Historical Society of Iowa. Federal ownership was transferred to the State subject to a condition that if the trails center is not being used for the purposes specified in the 1989 Act, the land and the center would revert to the United States.

Since 1998, the State has owned and operated the trails center. Presently, visitation at the center is very low, the hours of operation are limited, and maintenance is falling behind. The State of Iowa would like to remove the trails center from its responsibility and possibly transfer the property to the city of Council Bluffs.

The National Park Service currently does not own or directly manage any of the land associated with the 1989 Act. Moreover, it is the Committee's understanding that the National Park Service does not have any interest in taking over operation of the trails center or ownership of the property.

I commend Representative YOUNG for his outstanding work on behalf of his constituents. I would also like to thank the minority for their help and cooperation moving this legislation forward.

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

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

H.R. 2600 authorizes the conveyance to the State of Iowa the reversionary interest on the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

In 1989, Congress authorized the Department of the Interior to partner with the State of Iowa to create a trails interpretative center to support three National Historic Trails that cross through the region.

In 1988, the Secretary of the Interior transferred approximately 400 acres to the State of Iowa for use as a visitor center. Ownership was then transferred to the State with a reversionary clause that limits the use of the property to a visitor center.

The National Park Service does not operate or maintain the current visitor center. However, under current law, if the State stops using the site for its intended purpose, ownership will revert back to the Federal Government.

Since its establishment, the trails interpretative center has not lived up to its expectations. Visitation is low and the facility is in need of significant maintenance.

The National Park Service and the State of Iowa have determined that termination of the reversionary interest makes both fiscal and operational sense. This will allow the State to sell the property to the city of Council Bluffs, allowing the city to maintain the facility.

As long as the State continues to provide National Historic Trail interpretive services following the terms of the original agreement, Congress should be allowed to release the reversionary interest to this particular property.

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

□ 1500

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank both of my colleagues from California. I want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the committee for their leadership and working together with me, the National Park Service, the State of Iowa, Pottawattamie County, and the city of Council Bluffs on this bill.

The National Park Service holds reversionary rights to a small parcel of land in Council Bluffs in Pottawattamie County which highlights Lewis and Clark's travels with an interpretation center, as well as highlighting the California National Historic Trail and the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. However, the National Park Service has limited resources and a limited desire to effectively operate this property with the hundreds of properties it already maintains across the country.

So by listening to the Park Service, the State of Iowa, Pottawattamie County, the city of Council Bluffs, and local leaders and residents, a consensus and commonsense solution evolved to allow the city of Council Bluffs to accept responsibility for the property in determining its best use while still recognizing and highlighting the spirit and history of these historic trails.

I thank my colleagues from California, the ranking member, and the chairman of the committee.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2600, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK ACT

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1488) to retitle Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1488

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Indiana Dunes National Park Act''.

SEC. 2. INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE RETITLED AS INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Public Law 89–761 (16 U.S.C. 460u et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking ''National Lakeshore'' and ''national lakeshore'' each place it appears and inserting ''National Park''; and

(2) by striking ''lakeshore'' each place it appears and inserting ''Park''.

(b) NONAPPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a)(1) shall not apply to the title of the map referred to in the first section of Public Law 89–761 (16 U.S.C. 460u), or to the title of the maps referred to in section 4 of Public Law 89–761 (16 U.S.C. 460u–3).

SEC. 3. PAUL H. DOUGLAS TRAIL.

The 1.6 mile trail within the Indiana Dunes National Park designated the ''Miller-Woods Trail'' is hereby redesignated as the ''Paul H. Douglas Trail''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1488 would redesignate Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park.

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was established by Congress in 1966. The designation of the national lakeshore as a unit of the National Park Service was the culmination of decades of work by conservationists, area residents, and elected officials.

The original law included 8,330 acres of land and water. The National Park Service conservation advocates continued to seek expansion of the boundaries, and five subsequent laws increased the size of the national lakeshore to more than 15,000 acres.

In October 1916, shortly after the National Park Service was established, NPS Director Stephen Mather held hearings in Chicago to gauge public sentiment on a Sand Dunes National Park. In a Department of the Interior report published after the hearings, Director Mather stated: ''No national park or other Federal reservation offers this phenomenon for the pleasure and edification of the people, and no national park is as accessible. Furthermore, the dunes offer to the visitor extraordinary scenery, a large variety of plant life, magnificent bathing beaches, and splendid opportunities to camp and live in the wild close to nature.''

Despite Director Mather's support, the national park proposal was abandoned at the onset of World War I, and

several years later, in 1925, Indiana Dunes State Park was established. Redesignation of the national lakeside as a national park would make Indiana Dunes the 60th national park in the United States.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on H.R. 1488, the Indiana Dunes National Park Act. This act seeks to rename the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to the Indiana Dunes National Park, one of the over 400 units of the National Park System.

Upon successful redesignation, the Indiana Dunes National Park would become the 60th national park, areas which are known for their variety of resources, for encompassing large land and water areas, and for providing protection of resources within their boundaries.

Designated in 1966, Indiana Dunes protects over 15,000 acres, 50 miles of trails, and provides both summer and winter recreational activities for over 2 million visitors who trek to the lakeshore each year.

When the lakeshore was admitted into the National Park System in 1966, it was through the hard work of President Kennedy in 1963–64 to create a compromise for the national lakeshore and a port to promote the industrial needs of the area.

Sponsors of this bill, including our esteemed colleague Representative VISCLOSKY, believe that renaming the lakeshore as the Indiana Dunes National Park will capture the spirit and intent of the first National Park Service Director Stephen Mather.

Director Mather visited the area in 1916 and recommended the area be included as a national park within the newly designated National Park System. Sadly, the United States' entry into World War I precluded that addition. Now, 101 years later, this bill seeks to redesignate 15,000 acres of the Indiana Dunes National Park.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. VISCLOSKY), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman for yielding.

I want to begin by thanking Chairman BISHOP and Ranking Member GRIJALVA for all of their work on this legislation, as well as Chairman MCCLINTOCK and Ranking Member HANABUSA and Mrs. TORRES for their diligence.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation we are considering today represents a very small change—one word—but it would have an enormous benefit of rightly placing the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore where it belongs as the Nation's 60th national park and the first national park in the State of Indiana.

As mentioned, located along the southern shore of Lake Michigan, the Indiana Dunes are a natural wonder and home of a vast array of rare plants. According to the National Park Service, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is the seventh most biologically diverse National Park Service unit.

I believe the chairman and Mrs. TORRES ably described the history of the dunes and its evolution. I thank them for that, and I would thank all of the citizens over that half century and more that petitioned for the creation of this great park.

The lakeshore currently does encompass about 15,000 acres of wetlands and marshes, beaches, oak savannahs, and sand dunes. It is clear that the title of the Indiana Dunes National Park is fitting for such a unique natural resource.

The American taxpayers, over a number of generations, have invested in the preservation of the park. It is incumbent that we do everything possible to encourage citizens and travelers from around the world to visit it, to learn about it, to recreate, and to simply enjoy the environment of northwest Indiana's lakeshore. H.R. 1488 helps to achieve this goal.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the act is supported in a bipartisan fashion by the entire Indiana delegation. I would also like to thank Senators DONNELLY and YOUNG, who have introduced a companion measure in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support passage.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YOUNG of Iowa). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1488, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 2936.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 595 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2936.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. YOUNG) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1513

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2936) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, with Mr. YOUNG of Iowa in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Agriculture and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON), the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP), and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) will each control 15 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 1515

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

As I stated last Congress, our national forests are facing an epidemic of declining health, which is a direct result of policies which have led to a dramatic decrease in managed acres creating catastrophic wildfires that have increased in size and frequency.

The past two fire seasons have been some of the most expensive on record, and this year appears to be no exception. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue recently announced that wildland fire suppression costs for this fiscal year have exceeded $2 billion, making 2017 the most expensive year on record.

While the suppression costs are staggering, these fires come at a greater cost to local communities, private property, and pristine landscapes. Most importantly, they also result in the loss of life.

For too long, our good folks at the Forest Service have been unable to do the work needed to manage our forest fuel loads. Over the years, the problem has compounded with more severe fires. Furthermore, these fires have consumed more and more of the Forest Service budget that was intended for management. This cycle has gone on for far too long.

In the 2014 farm bill, we took meaningful steps to empower the Forest Service to carry out its mission. With passage of this bill, we will provide the Forest Service another tool to carry out their duties.

This bill builds on the success of the farm bill to allow the Forest Service and their partners to manage our forests using sound science and environmental protections without fear of frivolous litigation. Further, it promotes good stewardship through restoration projects that protect our watersheds after catastrophic fire.

As fuel loads increase in our national forests, the cost of inaction increases every day. This legislation allows the Forest Service to account for the environmental consequences of inaction, hopefully expediting treatments where needed.

Finally, this issue extends beyond just fire. While they have not yet gone up in smoke, some of our national forests continue to deteriorate as a result of insect and disease infestations, leaving what was pristine and productive habitat so many in this Congress seek to protect.

Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 25, 2017.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to confirm our mutual understanding with respect to H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Education and the Workforce with regard to H.R. 2936 on those matters within my committee's jurisdiction.

The Committee on Education and the Workforce will not delay further consideration of this bill. However, I do so only with the understanding this procedural route will not be construed to prejudice my committee's jurisdictional interest and prerogatives on this bill or any other similar legislation and will not be considered as precedent for consideration of matters of jurisdictional interest to my committee in the future.

I respectfully request your support for the appointment of outside conferees from the Committee on Education and the Workforce should this bill or a similar bill be considered in a conference with the Senate. I also request you include our exchange of letters on this matter in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House Floor. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chairwoman.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 25, 2017.

Hon. VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN FOXX: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2936, Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Education and the Workforce will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Education and the Workforce does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Education and the Workforce represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Education and the Workforce as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 25, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CONAWAY: I write concerning H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 2936, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. Finally, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I ask that you support my request to have the Committee represented on the conference committee.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest in the Congressional Record during House Floor consideration of the bill. I look forward to working with the Committee on Agriculture as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 25, 2017.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2936, Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 2936 addresses some valid concerns regarding forest management. The bill would simplify forest management activities while also tamping down on overzealous regulations and policy decisions made by activists and bureaucrats who have adopted a sue and settle strategy to pursue their agenda. This is one of the main reasons why I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2936.

While this bill isn't exactly what I would do if I was in charge of putting the bill together, we need to do something to address forest management concerns, and I believe that this bill seeks to do that and moves us in the right direction. So I am supportive of moving the process along so that we can negotiate with our Senate colleagues and find a workable solution to address these issues.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM).

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act. When we fail to actively manage our forests and Federal lands, we put ourselves and our neighbors at risk. It is time to better manage our fire-prone forests and fix how we pay for wildfire suppression.

California just experienced the deadliest wildfire in our history, and 2017 is on track to be the worst fire season on record. We can't wait until next season. We have got to put the right policies in place now.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act gives us the tools to immediately reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires. It allows us to expedite the removal of dead trees and rapidly mitigate disease-infested areas. It enables us to responsibly manage our forests and improve ecosystems, and it permanently solves the fire borrowing problem. No longer will we deplete forest restoration and management accounts to pay for wildfire suppression. This will give our firefighters the resources they need without hindering prevention efforts.

As California recovers from this year's fires, this bill will help us mitigate future wildfires. I urge my colleagues to pass this bill and help improve the health and resiliency of our Federal forests.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Association of California Water Agencies in support of H.R. 2936.

ASSOCIATION OF
CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES,
October 31, 2017.

ACWA SUPPORT FOR H.R. 2936—RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) respectfully requests your support for H.R. 2936, The Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. ACWA's 430 public water agency members supply over 90 percent of the water delivered in California for residential, agricultural, and industrial uses.

Recent severe drought and one of the most destructive wildfire seasons on record have focused renewed attention on the health of California's headwaters. That attention is well placed because the forests, meadows and source waters that play a critical role in our water supply and water management system are threatened by factors ranging from climate change to incomplete management to a lack of planning and coordination.

H.R. 2936 addresses many of these factors. It incentivizes and rewards collaboration with local governments and stakeholders by expediting environmental review for collaborative projects up to 30,000 acres in size. It also includes important provisions that will increase the yield and protect the quality of our headwaters.

Additionally, H.R. 2936 solves the perennial ''fire borrowing'' problem, in which federal land management agencies must raid nonfire suppression accounts in order to pay for suppression activities. H.R. 2936 ends this practice by allowing FEMA to transfer funds to the Forest Service/BLM when all fire suppression accounts have been exhausted.

As stated in ACWA's headwaters framework, ACWA believes with more effective management ''healthy headwaters'' could provide multiple benefits to California's water management system and the environment. These benefits include: Increased Water Supply Reliability; Improved Water Quality; Reduced Impacts from Catastrophic Wildfires; Increased Renewable Energy Supplies; Improved Response to Climate Change; and Enhanced Habitat.

ACWA encourages you to vote for H.R. 2936.

If you have any questions please contact David Reynold.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend and colleague from Minnesota, Congressman PETERSON, for yielding this time.

It is clear, I think, for everybody in this Chamber to know how devastating the fires have been, not only in California over the last recent weeks but throughout the West, and it has been this way for several years.

It is long overdue for Congress to address the many issues facing our forests under Federal management, and that is what this legislation attempts to do.

Years of mismanagement have contributed to the rise of catastrophic wildfires, not only in my home State of California but throughout the West. The heart of the problem is simple: money that Congress has allocated to prevent wildfires has been used instead to put them out.

Now, there are other factors involved as well to be sure, but for years what we have done with densely overgrown forests that need managing is we have set ourselves up to allow these densely overgrown forests to be the subject of very destructive fires if something should go wrong; and, of course, we have lightning strikes and we have other natural conditions that cause these fires.

This year alone, the United States Forest Service has spent about $2.4 billion on putting out fires and has transferred nearly $576 million from management activities. These management activities would go to thinning the forests and to allow for better overall growth. This would be a preventive means to decrease the ability of these fires to grow.

I have concerns with some of the provisions in this legislation and believe it can be improved with some modifications, specifically to the way fire borrowing is addressed and the size of categorical exemptions under public disclosure laws, but this is a work in progress, and we can deal with that.

Let me be clear. We must reform the way our Federal forests are managed, particularly the impacts as a result of the changing climate that we have and as it becomes more pronounced, such as drought conditions.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman from California an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman, the benefits of improved management will not only help with wildfire suppression, putting out these fires, but it will benefit the environment. With more effective management, healthier headwaters will provide for an estimated increased water supply of 300,000 acre-feet of additional water—that is significant, certainly in a State like California—and improved water quality downstream.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to work together to improve this legislation before it is sent to the Senate for consideration, because it is very clear in recent weeks, in recent months, and over the last 2 years that the status quo is unsustainable. We must do a better job in managing our forests.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN).

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for yielding me time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. The National Forest System is governed by the principle of multiple use—conferring maximum sustainable benefits in the form of wildlife habitat, recreation, clean air and water, and timber harvests.

Sadly, government red tape and the constant threat of litigation has caused paralysis by analysis at the Forest Service leading to a decrease of public recreation activities and a reduction of timber output.

In the counties surrounding the Apalachicola National Forest in Florida's Second District—Franklin, Leon, Liberty, and Wakulla—the lack of timber management not only means fewer jobs, but it also creates a smaller tax base which means fewer resources to provide basic services like law enforcement and good schools.

Under the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, forest management will be driven by forest health and not by fear of litigation. This improves stewardship and strengthens communities. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER).

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Chairman, I don't have any strong objections to the parts of this bill that deal with forest resilience, and I yield to people who know a lot more about forests than I do.

But I am concerned that H.R. 2936 is harmful for all of the species that rely on forests for habitat and that the bill specifically includes provisions that specifically attack and undermine the Endangered Species Act.

The bill allows the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to unilaterally determine if authorized logging and forestry management actions would adversely affect listed species or critical habitat without ever consulting experts at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as is required by the Endangered Species Act.

Furthermore, the bill declares that, for purposes of the ESA, all logging and other forestry activities carried out pursuant to the bill are ''nondiscretionary'' actions. Deeming these actions to be nondiscretionary serves as a direct waiver of the Endangered Species Act regulations and protections and allows forest activities to violate the ESA and jeopardize species.

Another provision exempts the Forest Service and BLM from implementing regulations that require consultation on management plans when a new species is listed as threatened or endangered or there is a new critical habitat designation.

This, in particular, will have profound implications for species that have been proposed or are candidates for listing under the ESA that rely on these lands for habitat, such as the North American wolverine.

In short, this bill dismantles interagency consultation that is integral to wildlife protection under the Endangered Species Act.

America's forests are home to over 400 threatened or endangered species, including the Florida panther, native wild trout, and the black-footed ferret. We cannot allow this bill to strip protections for these iconic species and eliminate environmental review processes for our Nation's forests. So on this basis—the threat to the Endangered Species Act—I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to my colleague from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Chairman, it is great to be able to speak on this. I am grateful to Mr. WESTERMAN. We share a great deal of interests, and Mr. THOMPSON.

As far as the endangered species, I remember hearing about how this little spotted owl only could mate in virgin forests, and then it turns out some pair were reported to have mated in a Kmart sign. But endangered species will do best in managed forests where we clear underbrush and where we make fire lanes—where we manage the forests. The forests do better, and you stop the wildfires.

If you want to just leave it to nature, nature will destroy massive numbers of acres of land. So we have a responsibility. Even in the Garden of Eden when things were perfect, God said to tend the garden.

So I appreciate the time, and I also appreciate the chairman's willingness to address the issue of the stewardship program so counties don't get messed over.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act. My district is home to three national forests, Ottawa, Hiawatha, and Huron-Manistee. So when we use the term ''in our neck of the woods,'' we mean it.

We understand how vitally important proper management of forests is for our environment, our economy, and our special way of life in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. I live right in the middle of the Ottawa National Forest, so this issue really does hit close to home for me.

Now as we have seen the devastation from forest fires in the West, it is more important than ever to have this debate. But it is impossible to talk about the need for wildfire suppression without talking about proper forest management. These two go hand in hand—or at least they should go hand in hand.

□ 1530

All too often, we hear rhetoric that managing our forests and removing dead or dying trees is a bad thing. This can't be further from the truth.

When we leave these dried, rotting trees laying on the forest floor, they become an incendiary breeding ground for fires. Those fires cost the Forest Service billions of dollars and countless hours of manpower to extinguish. Last year alone, we spent $2.9 billion on suppression efforts. This leaves barely any financial resources to allocate towards actually managing our forests.

H.R. 2936 seeks to end this cycle. Let's get at the problem now so it doesn't become a disaster later. This is not a partisan issue. This is a commonsense solution for our federally owned forest land.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee and a letter from the Intertribal Timber Council.

OCTOBER 31, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Subject: Support for HR 2936, The Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: As chair of the Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee, I am writing in strong support of HR 2936, The Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. I urge you to vote in support of HR 2936 when it comes to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote on Wednesday, November 1.

The Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee is a non-profit trust formed to pursue the common public policy interests of the working men and women in the forest products industry. Collectively, the Committee represents more than two million workers across the nation, including lumber and sawmill workers, woodworkers, machinists, carpenters, and pulp and paper workers.

The balanced and sustainable management of our federally-owned forests has been of significant interest to the Committee since it was founded in 1990. Since that time, the Committee has engaged on numerous pieces of federal forest and related legislation.

HR 2936 is a bipartisan measure that will address the growing economic and environmental threats posed by catastrophic wildfires. HR 2936 provides a responsible budgetary solution and targeted forest management reforms to improve the health and resiliency of America's forests. Adoption of these proposals will enhance federal forest stewardship; protect forest ecosystems from catastrophic fire and disease; and preserve rural, family wage jobs.

The Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee urges you to vote in support of HR 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, when the measure comes to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote this week.

Sincerely,

MIKE DRAPER,
Chairman, Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee.

INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL,
Portland, OR, July 5, 2017.

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

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP: The Executive Board of the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) supports H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, sponsored by Rep. Bruce Westerman.

We wish to particularly express our strong support for Title VII, which will enhance tribal input and involvement in the restoration of federal forest lands. Such restoration projects are sorely needed to improve forest health and reduce threats to lands held in trust for Indians as well as non-trust federal land upon which Indian tribes access for traditional, subsistence and treaty-guaranteed purposes.

Section 701 would provide timelines for review, approval and implementation of Tribal Forest Protection Act projects. This new authority is needed because of the underperformance of the TFPA authority. Thirteen years after Congress passed the TFPA, only three projects have been fully implemented, while others linger in years of procedural abyss. As a result, tribal forest lands remain at high risk of wildfire coming from adjacent federal lands. This section would give tribes the certainty to pursue TFPA projects with their federal neighbors and reduce the risk of wildfire migrating from federal lands onto Indian trust land.

Section 702 would give the Forest Service and BLM a new ability to have tribes carry out forest restoration projects in their homelands. Improvement of forest health and ecological functions are vital to maintain watersheds and fish and wildlife habitat on lands that may be subject to federally-reserved tribal rights. Acting through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, tribes would be able to restore lands using the federal regulatory structure used on Indian trust lands. As the Committee has noted on several occasions, tribal forest management is able to achieve greater results faster and at lower costs than on federal land. This provision would help bring that successful management approach to federal lands sorely in need of restoration.

Section 703 authorizes pilot authority for the Interior and Agriculture Departments to grant ''638'' contracting authority to tribes and tribal organizations for the administrative and management functions of TFPA projects.

The ITC is a forty-one year old association of more than fifty Indian tribes and Alaska Native organizations that collectively manage more than 90% of the 18 million acres of forest land held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The ITC is dedicated to pursuing the best management and protection of tribal forests and other natural resources. We actively participated in the development of the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (PL 101–630, 1990) and the Tribal Forest Protection Act (PL 108–278, 2004). It is our pleasure to now support H.R. 2936.

Sincerely,

PHIL RIGDON,
President.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2936.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, many of my colleagues have asked, because of the recent fires in my district, how I will be voting on this measure today. Well, I am a ''no.''

My district experienced the worst wildfires in California history. Fires burned close to 300,000 acres, killed 43 people, forced more than 100,000 people to evacuate, decimated some 7,000 homes, and left 10,000 people homeless in the city of Santa Rosa alone.

Our fires didn't burn Forest Service lands and they didn't start on public land, so nothing in this bill that we are discussing here today could have prevented the devastation in my district.

I agree that we should be doing more to prepare for catastrophic fire events, but this bill doesn't achieve that goal. Instead, it guts longstanding protections and fails to fix the budgetary issues that plague fire management. In

fact, this bill could make things worse by creating more red tape for agencies when they are actively responding to wildfires.

That is why I joined Representative HUFFMAN to introduce an amendment that would have more directly addressed the risk of wildfires. We incorporated provisions based on:

Representatives SIMPSON's and SCHRADER's Wildfire Disaster Funding Act that gives land management agencies access to funding to fight wildfires without jeopardizing other agency programs;

Legislation that I dropped today that is the companion bill to Senators CANTWELL's and RISCH's Wildland Fires Act, which provides funding to help communities prepare for wildfires and target high-risk areas for prescribed burns. The gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI) is the coauthor of that legislation;

We incorporated Representatives LAMALFA's and SCHRADER's Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act, which passed the House earlier this year, and allows for hazardous vegetation management on Federal lands that abut electrical transmission lines;

We also incorporated Representative RUIZ's Wildfire Prevention Act that allows States to apply for hazard mitigation grants for wildfire prevention projects.

Instead of considering controversial measures that will meet a dead end once it gets to the Senate, we should pass these bipartisan, practical, and effective solutions.

The fires that tore across my State must not be used as an excuse to undermine fundamental environmental laws that protect public lands. They should motivate us to work together to protect communities from the devastation that my constituents are facing today.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE).

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I also thank the gentleman from Arkansas, a trained forester, for his efforts to reform how we manage our forests.

Montana faced a devastating wildfire season. Over 1 million acres have burned in our State. Lives were lost. Our livelihoods were threatened. Wildlife habitats were destroyed. We breathed the smoke as the clouds hung in the air.

Earlier this week, the gentleman from Arkansas and I met with conservationists, the Forest Service, local leaders, and key stakeholders, including the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. They all affirmed that litigation and an inability to inappropriately manage our forests are the problem that lead to severe wildfires.

When catastrophic wildfires strike, we keep treating the symptoms—suppressing the fires—and somehow think that the next wildfire will be different. We have to address the underlying issues. We have to reform how we manage our forests. We have to make our forests healthier and our wildfires less severe. We can begin that process today.

The people of Montana need relief and a long-term solution. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. ISSA). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter of support for the legislation from the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association, and a statement of support from the former Chief of the Forest Service, Tom Tidwell.

NLBMDA PRAISES REINTRODUCTION OF RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT

WASHINGTON, DC.—The National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) praises the introduction yesterday of the Resilient Federal Forests Act by (H.R. 2936) Rep. Bruce Westerman (R–AR). The legislation helps protect the national forest system by implementing best practices intended to lessen the threat of wildfires. Original cosponsors for the bipartisan bill include Reps. Raúl Labrador (R–ID), Tom McClintock (R–CA), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R–WA), Rick Nolan (D–MN), Collin Peterson (D–MN), and Scott Tipton (R–CO).

Rep. Westerman introduced the legislation during the previous Congress in 2015, where it passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 262–167 with support from 21 Democrats who crossed the aisle to support the bill.

The U.S. Forest Service manages over 190 million acres. Of this, 46 million acres is designated as allowable for timber harvest. Timber harvests from federal forests declined by 78 percent between 1987 and 2015, from 11.3 to 2.5 billion board feet. This is far below the long-term, sustainable capability of these lands of 12.2 billion board feet per year.

Poor land management during the past 30 years has led to declining health of national forests. This has resulted in fewer jobs and productivity in the forestry sector, fewer board feet of domestically produced lumber entering the market, and a marked increase in acreage ravaged by insects, disease and fire.

''The Resilient Federal Forests Act strikes a balanced approach in managing the national forest system by making more land available for logging in an environmentally sustainable way,'' said Jonathan Paine, NLBMDA President and CEO. ''NLBMDA thanks Congressman Westerman for his leadership on this important issue.''

NLBMDA supports greater sustainable harvesting of federal forests to meet long-term demand for lumber as part of a comprehensive plan that does not place U.S. private forests at a competitive disadvantage.

STATEMENT OF TOM TIDWELL, CHIEF, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOREST SERVICE

SUBMITTED TO THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS ON THE RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present a statement regarding the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. The U.S. Forest Service is currently reviewing this discussion draft, and the Administration does not have a position on it at this time.

We appreciate the significant work the Subcommittee put into this bill since it was last introduced in the 114th Congress. We also appreciate your efforts to incorporate Forest Service comments and recommendations and are encouraged by many of the goals outlined within this bill. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staffs on the details to ensure this legislation results in meaningful improvements to forest management work on the ground.

The Forest Service welcomes legislation that expands the toolset we can use to restore our nation's forests while staying within the boundaries and intent of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. Forest restoration projects provide rural jobs, mitigate the severity of wildfires, enhance watershed conditions, and ensure a variety of other economic, social and environmental benefits for the American people. Provisions that expand categorical exclusions, incentivize collaboration, and streamline environmental analysis or consultation with other federal agencies are all important issues in the bill that we are reviewing.

It is notable that the Resilient Federal Forests Act does not contain provisions that would mandate harvest levels, require a new layer of zoning on the National Forests, or elevate one use over another on these multiple-use lands, as we have seen in other recent forestry bills.

While we support efforts to provide new tools to improve forest management and restoration, capacity constraints, including the present approach to budgeting for wildfire, continue to be impediments to increasing the pace and scale of this work. We look forward to continuing to work with you on the wildfire title to find a solution that addresses the disproportionate growth of fire programs as a share of the agency's overall budget.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement. The Forest Service stands ready to continue working with you on this important legislation.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SCHRADER).

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Chairman, this fire season has put the need for real forest management in stark relief for those of us who live out West.

The current laissez-faire forest policy, with random desperate measures to fight increasingly horrific fires that threaten and destroy rural and now—as we have seen in California—suburban communities is completely inadequate and increasingly costly to the taxpayer.

This bill, contrary to what some have said, rewards communities that have proactive, collaborative programs; stewardship programs; rural advisory committees; and wildfire protection plans to manage their forests without redundant NEPA processes.

A few thousand acres out of the millions acres of Federal forest land are now going to be enabled to be managed for wildlife successional forest habitat; removal of dangerous roadside and infrastructure threatening vegetation; insect and disease infestations; reducing hazardous fuel in the forests; and,

frankly, doing a little reforesting of salvage projects, which should have been allowed years ago.

We also pilot a few arbitration projects to stop the endless frivolous litigation of every single forest project, at least in Oregon, and I think elsewhere.

SRS payments continue to rural communities whose way of life has been, basically, taken away from them by the endless frivolous litigation in our Federal forests. Counties, for the first time, get some revenue from the very stewardship contracts that we want to encourage, but not at the expense of rural communities' economic health.

Many are still stuck in the recession, and this bill is critical to their revival. Oregon counties in the Oregon and California railroad areas also get the opportunity to be made whole again, like the original statute said.

I think it is important to note for a lot of our friends out there that the current regional forest plans still apply and are not undermined. We just give flexibility to the Forest Service folks within the regions to do what they think needs to be done to keep those forests healthy. We empower good management.

For those of you who are interested in innovation, this bill actually calls out cross-laminated timber and other thoughtful uses of forests and timber that can bring environmental and timber groups together like it should be in the 21st century.

Finally, most important of all for some folks, we actually get wildfire disaster funding included as a reasonable topic of conversation and get out of the current fire-borrowing policy that is preventing the Forest Service and BLM from doing good forest management to prevent those fires in the first place.

On balance, frankly, this is a very good bill and it is much-needed at this time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. LABRADOR).

Mr. LABRADOR. Mr. Chairman, the Resilient Federal Forests Act contains many provisions that will give the Forest Service additional tools to better manage our national forests.

To keep our forests healthy and productive, we must ensure we have skilled loggers to safely work in those forests. I thank Representative WESTERMAN for including my bill, the Future Logging Careers Act, in his bill that is on the floor today.

My bill will allow 16- and 17-year-olds to learn the logging business by working in family-owned mechanized logging operations under the supervision of their parents. That will allow the next generation of loggers to learn valuable skills, prepare to take over family businesses, and provide the wood products needed to support our economy.

I learned of the need for this bill after meeting two Idaho loggers from third-generation logging families, Tim Christopherson from Idaho County and Tom Mahon from Adams County.

Mahon's 16-year-old son, J.T., was working under his father's supervision when a Forest Service employee sent him home. J.T. couldn't work in the woods because logging doesn't have an exemption that has long been enjoyed by family farms under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Idaho.

Mr. LABRADOR. With help from the families and the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho, we crafted a solution that is good for families, good for rural America, and good for the American economy.

I am grateful for the bipartisan effort on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter from the National Wild Turkey Federation and a letter from the National Association of Counties, Western Interstate Region, in support of H.R. 2936.

NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION,
Edgefield, SC, June 26, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Natural Resources Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. RAÚL GRIJALVA,
Ranking Democrat, Natural Resources Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP AND REPRESENTATIVE GRIJALVA: On behalf of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) and its 230,000 members, we urge you to take swift Committee action on H.R. 2936 the Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2017. The NWTF is a leader in wildlife habitat conservation in North America and is dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and preservation of our hunting heritage. We are currently working towards our 10-year Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt initiative in which we aim to conserve or enhance 4 million acres of critical habitat, recruit 1.5 million hunters and open 500,000 acres for outdoor enjoyment

Active forest management is crucial to establishing healthy and sustainable forests and decisions for forest management should be based on sound science. As such, the common sense solutions offered in H.R. 2936 are imperative to the health and future of our nation's forests and important to the NWTF to help achieve our objectives. In total, H.R. 2936 has many reasonable solutions to the challenges that the managing agencies face to increase the pace and efficiency of active forest management on our nation's federal lands. We take this opportunity to highlight those solutions that we believe will make the most immediate difference and offer recommendations as to how we believe the bill can be further improved.

We support increased availability for Categorical Exclusions (CE) in order to deal more effectively and efficiently with threats like pests and disease and for addressing urgent wildlife needs like critical habitat for endangered species. We are especially supportive of the CE that will allow for activities that enhance early successional forests for wildlife habitat. Unlike some critics of CEs who will suggest, they do not exempt the action from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), rather they apply the NEPA review to like or similar actions to expedite the process. These are administered under Council on Environmental Quality regulations and other guidance. Increased use of CEs is one of the best opportunities we have in the short term to increase the pace of active forest management.

Funding the cost of fighting catastrophic wildfires outside of the agency budget is paramount to the agency's ability to deliver on other aspects of their mission. We are supportive of a fix that will allow catastrophic wildfires to be considered a disaster. Until agencies are freed from the burden of fighting catastrophic wildfires through their annual budgets we will be unable to make meaningful progress towards proactive forest management. We recommend capping the firefighting budget at the current 10-year average to protect further erosion of the U.S. Forest Service budget in other important mission delivery areas.

We support the bill's provisions for large scale reforestation on fire-impacted lands. While public input and review is essential to public lands management, currently it can result in delayed action and result in an inability to accomplish the necessary objectives. We believe the deadlines set for plan development and public input, as well as the prohibition on restraining orders and preliminary injunctions strike a reasonable balance. We recommend that this provision of the bill clarify that proper ecological restoration is allowed as a mechanism to salvage forests post catastrophic events as reforestation may not always be the best action for the ecological good.

The NWTF strongly supports arbitration as an alternative to litigation. This will conserve valuable U.S. Forest Service resources and expedite work getting done on the ground. Additionally, we support the provision that does not allow plaintiffs challenging a forest management activity to receive any award or payment obligated from the Claims and Judgment Fund.

We support the approach for allowing evaluation of only action/no-action alternatives for collaborative Forest Plans, Resource Advisory Committee and Community Wildfire Protection Plan projects. Limiting the number of alternatives will expedite the development of environmental assessments and allow work to get done on the ground more quickly. We also support the requirement to look at consequences of a no-action alternative as a no-action decision would still have an impact on the resource.

We understand budget concerns counties face and are supportive of a portion of retained receipts from stewardship contracts going to the counties. Stewardship Contracting is an important tool for active forest management. Ultimately this change will remove one impediment to utilizing Stewardship Contracting and help garner support from the counties. We recommend modifying this section to reflect that payment should come only from retained receipts on completed projects, versus strictly from timber value within ongoing projects. This will maintain the ''exchange of goods for services'' function of Stewardship Contracting while also preserving the balance of timber dollars and the investment of matching funds from organizations like the NWTF to expand the scope and scale of projects, thus accomplishing more active management and fire protection across the landscape and within counties.

We appreciate the recognition of the importance of funding planning activities for forest management. We are concerned that the provision could potentially provide justification for the U.S. Forest Service staff to refrain from fully utilizing product value and

partner match dollars for on the ground work. While we feel the 25% threshold is too high, the provision of allowing some of the stewardship project revenues to cover the costs of planning additional projects could be beneficial and incentivize project planning.

We also appreciate the common-sense amendments to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that will improve the process of protecting endangered and threatened species and their habitat. The bill overturns the ''Cottonwood'' court decision, which directs that if additional critical habitat is designated under an approved Forest Plan or Resource Management Plan, a section 7 programmatic re-consultation of the entire Forest Plan needs to be done. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Obama Administration argued that the section 7 consultation needs only to be done on the portion of the project covering the additionally designated acreage of critical habitat. The remedy in this bill will greatly reduce the debilitating process that the federal court decision directs. The bill also affirms current U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policy that no ESA section 7 consultation is required if the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management determines through informal consultation that the proposed action will not likely have an adverse affect on species or critical habitat. We further support the 90 day threshold on a CE established by this bill because it will conserve agency resources and expedite management activities on the ground.

We commend Congressman Westerman, the co-sponsors, and Chairman Bishop for their dedication to restoring and maintaining our federal forests under management informed by science, and offering the appropriate reforms to management practices. We respectfully urge that you expeditiously report H.R. 2936 out of Committee and to the House floor.

Sincerely,

REBECCA A. HUMPHRIES,
Chief Executive Officer.

JUNE 21, 2017.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WESTERMAN: On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo) the only organization representing the nation's 3,069 counties, parishes, and boroughs, and the Western Interstate Region (WIR), we write to express support for H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. Thank you for your leadership in introducing legislation to promote the active management of our nation's federal lands and forests, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and promote collaborative approaches to address natural resource management challenges.

The legislation will improve the health and wellbeing of forest lands and forest communities by: promoting collaboration and streamlining regulations for forest health projects, protecting communities through wildfire risk reduction, improving flexibility and fairness in forest revenue sharing, and delegating the authority for Resource Advisory Committees (RAC) appointments.

PROMOTING COLLABORATION AND STREAMLINING REGULATIONS FOR FOREST HEALTH PROJECTS

Counties believe that active management of federal lands and forests must be done in a sustainable manner that ensures the health of our federal lands for generations to come. One way to help ensure a balanced approach to address natural resource management challenges is by promoting locally driven collaborative processes that promote consensus driven decision making. Counties across the United States have engaged in collaborative efforts to address their natural resources challenges. By bringing a broad cross-section of local stakeholders into collaborative processes, counties, industry, outdoorsmen, conservationists and federal and state land managers have built consensus on some of the most complex natural resource management challenges.

By authorizing limited and reasonable categorical exclusions for projects that improve forest health and have been developed through consensus based collaborative processes, H.R. 2936 builds upon these successes and provides additional tools to help ensure that collaborative efforts continue to work, accelerate and expand. Streamlining the regulatory review of proposed forestry projects will increase project implementation and the number of acres that are treated.

PROTECTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION

For the 26 percent of counties across the United States that are home to federal forest lands, the health of our national forests has a direct impact on the health and safety of county residents. Healthy forests are less prone to disease, insect infestation, and wildfire. While the causes of catastrophic wildfire are complex, the status quo of inaction has exacerbated present forest conditions, which now present a great risk to both communities and the environment. Your legislation would help to correct this by requiring the costs and benefits of a proposed forest project be weighed against the costs and benefits of doing nothing to address wildfire threats, disease and insect infestation, and their impacts on local water supply and wildlife habitat.

Provisions of the legislation expediting regulatory analysis for timber salvage after major wildfires are also crucial, and will provide the Forest Service with the revenue it needs to execute critical and time-sensitive post-fire reforestation work.

PROVIDING FLEXIBILITY AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF FOREST REVENUES

In addition to improving forest health and reducing wildfire risk for forest communities, increased active management will generate more revenue for the federal treasury and critical services provided by counties, and promote job creation and economic growth in counties across the nation. According to the American Forest and Paper Association, forest products industries account for 4% of U.S. manufacturing GDP and over $50 billion annually in wages for approximately 900,000 employees. These jobs provide a direct economic impact to many rural and forest counties across the country.

The growth in stewardship contracting in recent years has shown that a market-driven approach to forest management projects can work to achieve both forest management goals and increased forest production. Counties support and are active partners in stewardship contracting initiatives across the United States. NACo and WIR support provisions of H.R. 2936 that authorize the equitable sharing of stewardship contracting revenues with counties consistent with historic practices. Forest revenue sharing payments support critical county services such as transportation infrastructure and education. America's counties look forward to working with Congress to further strengthen forest revenue sharing between counties and the federal government.

Since 2000, due to sharp declines in forest revenues, the federal government has provided payments to forest counties through the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. The SRS program provides a critical safety-net for forest counties impacted by declines in forest production and the loss of forest jobs and it will continue to be a critical program until the declines in forest production can be fully addressed. H.R. 2936 reforms Title III of SRS that provide much needed flexibility for counties to use a portion of SRS funding to support law enforcement patrols and ensure county first-responders have the equipment and training they need to provide high-quality emergency services on forest service land to county residents and the millions of public lands visitors each year.

DELEGATING THE AUTHORITY FOR RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC) APPOINTMENTS

Finally, counties support legislation to ensure rural counties can actively coordinate with federal agencies through flexibility in RAC membership and appointments. NACo and WIR support allowing the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and U.S. Secretary of the Interior to delegate the authority for appointing RAC members to agency leaders, such as Regional Foresters or Bureau of Land Management State Directors. Counties should be included in the development and implementation of public lands management plans, and RACs allow county leaders to actively participate in this process. Your legislation would allow the Secretary to delegate RAC appointment authority, and ensure locally-driven efforts to better manage federal lands can begin in a timely manner.

NACo and WIR stand ready to work with you to promote locally supported, consensus-driven solutions to address management challenges, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, and increase economic activity on our federal lands. NACo and WIR encourage swift passage of the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW D. CHASE,
Executive Director, National Association of Counties.

JOEL BOUSMAN,
President, Western Interstate Region.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chairman, nationwide, this year has been the most expensive year on record, with over $2 billion spent to combat fires that have burned almost 9 million acres of land.

As of October 29, State and Federal firefighters responded to 8,300-plus fires, covering over 1.1 million acres in California alone, nearly doubling the amount of acres burned in 2016.

A complete lack of forest management in California has left our forests more combustible than ever, leading to one of the worst wildfire seasons in our State's history. That is why the bill of my colleague, Mr. WESTERMAN, H.R. 2936, is very important.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act includes what I believe to be critically important reforms in forest management, such as expedited environmental reviews and the availability of categorical exclusions for forest management activities to help achieve these goals.

Our Federal lands are hurting. They are in desperate need to be managed in order to not have these disasters each and every year. We can either thin the trees and the brush out, or watch them

go up in smoke every year and become part of our brown skies, instead of the blue skies that we would normally enjoy.

We can't afford this inaction anymore. We need to move this legislation and clean up California's forests for all.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, this bill is not perfect, but it has a lot of good provisions.

I urge support of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member of the Agriculture Committee for his support, and also Mr. WESTERMAN from Arkansas, the author of this bill.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017 is a bipartisan solution to address the growing economic and environmental threats from catastrophic wildfires.

As we have heard already, 2017 has had the costliest wildfires on record, with the Forest Service spending over $2 billion. We have had the loss of communities and lives lost. The greatest cause of this uptick in wildfires is the severe lack of forest management.

□ 1545

This legislation pairs a responsible budget fix with forest management reforms, improves the health and resiliency of our Nation's forests and rangelands, and provides Federal Land Management agency tools to increase the pay scale and cost efficiency of forest management projects without sacrificing environmental protections.

The bill permanently solves the wildfire borrowing problem by allowing FEMA to transfer limited funds to the Forest Service or BLM when the rest of their wildfire suppression funding has been exhausted.

It prevents wildfires by authorizing the tools for the Forest Service, tools that they are looking for in the Bureau of Land Management that they can implement immediately to mitigate insect and disease infestation, prevent damage to municipal watersheds and critical infrastructure quickly, harvest wildfire, kill trees to pay for the reforestation, and the bill encourages quick reforestation that accelerates habitat improvement.

This bill does incentivize collaboration, supports local government, and modernizes the Secure Rural Schools Act.

Mr. Chairman, I would just ask my colleagues for their support of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As we make this transition, let me try and sum up where we are at this particular time.

This particular bill was done in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service under both the Obama administration and the Trump administration. This has the approval of local governments, Tribes, sportsmen's groups, and labor unions. The last time we had this bill, it had a good bipartisan vote on it, but these are issues that the Forest Service needs and they can use on day one of their issue.

What the Forest Service needs are resources, obviously. We know that. But they also need the tools that they need to actually do their work.

Now, there are some on the fringe who are going to say that everything is wrong here, but I would encourage them to get rid of the usual rhetoric and to pocket the dogma for a minute and realize that what we need to do is come up with a system that affects the planning process.

The Forest Service admits they have 50 to 60 million acres of forestland today that is ready to be a catastrophic catastrophe. They want to treat 25 percent of what they own a year. They are only treating 2 to 3 percent. That means, of the 50 to 60 million acres they have that are in dire situations right now, they can only treat 3 a year. That would take them 20 years to try and get through what needs to be treated unless we give them new tools to reform the system to make that process going in, and that is exactly what this bill does: it rewards collaboration; it tries to stop unnecessary litigation; it comes up with arbitration concepts that are in there; it expands the ability of streamlining the process so they can get to work.

Our people need the resources to do their job. They need the tools. We should make it very clear that money alone is not going to solve the problem of wildfire catastrophe. What we have to do is solve the conditions that create the catastrophic wildfires in the first place, and that means that we need to make sure that we are doing things so we can prohibit what has happened, which has been devastating to people and their property; which has destroyed habitat for species, endangered and unendangered; and which has created conditions of pollution in our atmosphere.

All that has to take place. Everything in this bill is what the experts in the Forest Service said they can do on day one after it is passed. It needs to take place. It needs to be in addition to the financial solving of the wildfire situation. You need to have these reforms, and that is what we are pushing in this bill. It is why it is so desperately needed and why it was worked out with the experts in the field.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to H.R. 2936, the so-called Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. Perhaps a better name would be the ''Log America's Forest Act of 2017.''

But before I address the many concerns with the underlying bill, I must commend my colleagues across the aisle for attempting to deal with the biggest barrier to improved management of our national forests: the enormous cost and impact of wildfire suppression on the Forest Service budget.

Over 50 percent of the Forest Service budget is eaten up by wildfire, and if things don't change, the agency predicts that it will increase to two-thirds in just 5 years. Unfortunately, the budget fix in this bill falls short.

First, it requires Congress to appropriate an amount equal to the 10-year average before emergency funding is available. We know that climate change results in longer and more intense wildfire seasons, making the 10-year average irrelevant to the ever-increasing need for funding. Because the average is too low, the real number will keep growing, meaning the amount of funding that must be taken from the Forest Service accounts will continue to grow. Fighting fires will continue squeezing out money for the active management my Republican colleagues are so eager to prioritize.

Second, requiring the President to declare each fire a national emergency before releasing funds is unnecessarily bureaucratic and could delay emergency operations.

We need a holistic fix for the wildfire budget that makes money available in advance of a critical emergency, but Republicans would rather play politics with fire to undermine environmental safeguards.

This is not the first time we have seen the bill, this piece of legislation. House Republicans sent a version to the Senate in the 113th and the 114th Congresses, where it languished on the shelf because our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol found it too extreme.

Rather than view that experience as an opportunity to seek compromise this time around, today we are considering a bill that is even more extreme and polarizing. They doubled the environmental review waivers, added language to undermine the Endangered Species Act, and scaled back protections for national monuments and roadless areas.

We are told that this is all in the name of decreasing wildfire risk and protecting communities. The truth is that it is just more of the same from House Republicans who will look for any excuse to advance their extraction-above-all agenda.

Wildfires are a huge problem in this country due, in large part, to climate change, something this bill ignores. By the way, they are becoming more frequent and more intense, and they pose a growing threat to public safety and local communities.

This bill is not about forest health or wildfire mitigation. It is about increasing the number of trees removed from our forests. Republicans would rather scare us into weakening environmental safeguards than work on a possible bipartisan solution to wildfire management.

A serious proposal would recognize the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior have ample authority within current law to conduct fire treatment on our public lands. In fact, the 2009 Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, established the last time Democrats controlled the House, has resulted in the treatment of over 1.45 million acres of national forests to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire and the improvement of over 1.33 million acres of wildlife habitat.

In just 5 years, the program generated more than $661 million in local labor income and an average of 4,300 jobs per year. The projects have attracted new partners and strengthened community relationships, leveraging over $76.1 million in partner matching funds. Collaborative programs like this bring people to the table and result in more acres treated, more local jobs, and more successful projects. Again, all of this has taken place within the framework of the current law.

Increased funding for programs like Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration should be a priority for Republicans, but this program was zeroed out by the Trump administration budget, and extreme proposals like this bill chip away at the principal pillars of law that make collaboration possible. Our constituents and our forests deserve better.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a letter from the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and a letter sent from 40 forestry coalitions that are in support of this particular bill.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICERS,
Washington, DC, October 24, 2017.

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

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP: On behalf of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO), we would like to thank you and Congressman Bruce Westerman for including language in the manager's amendment to H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. The language, which calls for the establishment of a Nationwide Programmatic Agreement to pursue an efficient and effective solution to historic preservation review, ensures state and local input on the impact of federal undertakings on historic resources.

The establishment of the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement is consistent with the principal of states and communities having a lead role in evaluating the impact of federal projects on historic resources. This principal was enshrined in law more than 50 years ago with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act and strengthened more than 40 years ago by the creation of the Historic Preservation Fund.

Wildfires pose a threat to historic resources and NCSHPO supports your effort to reduce their risk. As the bill moves forward, NCSHPO and its members remain ready and willing to help find a solution to any challenges faced in the management of our nation's forests. Our members are committed to assisting federal agencies in achieving this goal, while also ensuring that state and local governments continue to have say in the impact of federal undertakings on historic resources.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

ERIK M. HEIN,
Executive Director.

JUNE 27, 2017.

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

Hon. RAUL GRIJALVA,
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP & RANKING MEMBER GRIJALVA: We write to you today in strong support of HR 2936, the bipartisan Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

Our federal forests are facing serious threats from fires, insects, and diseases due to lack of active forest management. The poor health of our federal forests also threatens wildlife habitat, watersheds, and neighboring non-Federal lands, as well as the vitality of rural, forested communities across the country. HR 2936 contains provisions intended to both address the disruption caused by fire borrowing and to expedite needed forest management to improve the health and vitality of our federal forests.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act provides Categorical Exclusions (CE's) under the National Environmental Policy Act will allow needed forest management projects to be more quickly prepared, analyzed, and implemented. It will also allow forest recovery projects to proceed more quickly, addressing a dire need created by recent wildfire seasons. The Forest Service has long experience with management techniques to reduce forest pests, thin hazardous fuels, create and maintain habitat for species, recover damaged timber and protect water quality. These projects mitigate risk and help create early successional forest habitat which is good for wildlife.

The Forest Service does more complex NEPA documentation than most other Federal agencies, and even after years of collaboration, frequently finds itself in court where judges scrutinize procedural issues, delaying needed management, sometimes for years. The Resilient Federal Forests Act addresses the complex, court-imposed NEPA burden that has been forced on the Forest Service, while preserving collaborative efforts and avoiding sensitive forest lands.

HR 2936 addresses both the excessive analysis requirements imposed on even modest forest management projects, as well as the dysfunctional system of funding suppression costs out of forest management program accounts. Provisions in the bill limit the acreage of Categorical Exclusions, and prohibits their use in sensitive areas. The legislation provides access to the disaster relief fund for wildfire suppression expenses in excess of the 10-year average.

The House acted on a similar, bipartisan bill in 2015. The need for action to address forest health conditions on our national forest system is even higher today. Wildfire suppression funding mechanisms developed in the past are no longer adequate to address the conditions we are experiencing. We urge to take up and pass HR 2936 as quickly as possible.

We stand ready to work with both of you advance responsible solutions to these serious national problems.

Alabama Loggers Council; Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, Inc.; American Farm Bureau Federation; American Forest & Paper Association; American Forest Resource Council; American Loggers Council; Arkansas Forestry Association; Arkansas Timber Producers Association; Associated California Loggers; Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho; Associated Oregon Loggers; Association of Consulting Foresters; Black Hills Forest Resource Association; California Forestry Association; Carolina Loggers Association; Colorado Timber Industry Association; Coos County (Oregon) Board of Commissioners; Deere & Co; Great Lakes Timber Professionals; Hardwood Federations.

Intermountain Forest Association; Louisiana Forestry Association; Michigan Association of Timbermen; Michigan Forest Products Council; Minnesota Forest Industries; Minnesota Timber Producers Association; Mississippi Loggers Association; Missouri Forest Products Association; Montana Logging Association; Montana Wood Products Association; National Wildfire Institute; New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association; New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts; New Mexico Forest Industry Association; Northeastern Loggers Association; Professional Logging Contractors of Maine; South Carolina Timber Producers Association; Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association; Sustainable Forest Action Coalition; Treated Wood Council.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, introduced by my friend and colleague BRUCE WESTERMAN.

Our forests and the communities that live, work, and rely on them desperately need improved management practice to reduce these forest fire disasters and to increase resiliency.

I was very pleased with the quick work by my friend and former colleague OMB Director Mick Mulvaney for addressing the wildfire funding crisis at the United States Forest Service, requesting $576.5 million for wildfire suppression and recommending active management reforms.

Now, while the Trump administration came through in a big way for Western communities that have been ravaged by catastrophic wildfires, Congress must pass H.R. 2936 and get serious about combating catastrophic wildfires before they get started.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act is a bipartisan, comprehensive piece of legislation that simplifies the cumbersome planning process and reduces the cost of implementing proactive forest management strategies.

H.R. 2936 empowers local communities by getting them involved in the decisionmaking process. It empowers Tribal communities to be part of the solution and help reduce the risk of wildfire.

The bill removes incentives for extreme special interest groups to file frivolous lawsuits. In fact, it requires litigants opposing active management projects to propose an alternative plan as opposed to just saying ''no.'' Imagine that, solutions over lawsuits.

Mismanagement has left our forests vulnerable to insects and disease and ripe for catastrophic wildfires. It is clear the system is broken. Western communities are tired of being victims, and this bill allows us to be proactive and to prevent disasters before they become a risk.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD two letters, one from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the second from the National Association of Home Builders, in support of H.R. 2936.

ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES,
Washington, DC, June 26, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. RAÚL GRIJALVA,
Ranking Democrat, House Natural Resources Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP AND RANKING DEMOCRAT GRIJALVA: The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) is pleased to support H.R. 2936, the ''Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2017'' (RFFA). All 50 state agencies are members of the Association. Founded in 1902, the Association's mission is to protect the interests and authorities of the states to manage fish and wildlife within their borders, including on federal land. The Association works closely with the federal land management agencies to deliver on the ground conservation of fish, wildlife and their habitats for our citizens.

The Association is particularly appreciative of changes made by the Committee staff at the request of the Association. These changes make more prominent in federal statute the states' authority to manage fish and wildlife on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. Nothing in the amended language is intended to change any existing federal, state or tribal authority. It simply makes more evident the state-federal jurisdictional relationship which Congress has affirmed. Federal-state cooperation in this arena is compelled because the USFS and BLM own the land and thus the habitat, and the state fish and wildlife agencies manage the fish and wildlife. Robust cooperation will provide that both land/habitat objectives and fish and wildlife population objectives are met.

The RFFA is vitally needed to restore the health of our Nation's federal forests on USFS and BLM lands. Unfortunately, the USFS and BLM have fallen significantly behind in meeting objectives for early successional stage forest habitat, for a number of reasons. Significantly, federal court decisions and increasing uninformed litigation has created ''paralysis by analysis'' to quote a former USFS Chief. Congress mandated that the federal forests were to be managed for water quality, wildlife habitat, recreation, and timber harvest. Active forest management by the federal professional managers in cooperation with the state fish and wildlife agency professional managers has been replaced by natural resource management decisions being made by the federal courts. A return to active forest management will facilitate realization of all of the public values of federal forests.

The Association much appreciates that the fire-borrowing problem is addressed in HR 2936. While most catastrophic fires occur in the western United States, this is a national problem because the funds for every national forest and public land unit are affected. This remedy will prevent the USFS and BLM from having to borrow from other appropriated line-items (for example, wildfire prevention, wildlife, recreation and water quality) to pay for the cost of catastrophic fire suppression, which cost consumes over 50% of the USFS budget. We respectfully urge the Committee to further protect the USFS budget by capping the 10-year average cost of catastrophic fire costs at its current level. The 10-year average is used by the USFS in building their budget request. The 10-year average continues to rise and unless it is capped it will continue to erode other important budget line items such as wildlife, water quality, fire prevention and recreation in the President's budget.

The Association further appreciates the process relief provided to National Forest Plans (NFP) and (potentially) Resource Management Plans (RMP) developed by collaborative deliberation. It is appropriate that a collaborative-developed plan, which often takes years to deliberate and conclude, be subject to only two options under NEPA, proceed or not proceed. It is very reasonable to assume that the collaboratively deliberated process has examined and rejected the other options, and only the action or no action need be analyzed.

The bill's establishment of a pilot binding arbitration process as an alternative to litigation in each FS Region is certainly welcomed by the Association. Not only is the cost of defending the land management plan a burden on the agencies, but the planned for management work on the ground is lost, perhaps never to be resurrected on that site. We commend Congressman Westerman and the Committee for settling on this significant improvement to litigation reform that was in HR 2647 from the last Congress.

We also appreciate the increase in acreage ceilings for the statutorily endorsed Categorical Exclusions (CEs) under NEPA. CEs must avoid sensitive areas and must be consistent with standards and guidelines in Forest Plans. Early forest successional stage habitat, for instance, cannot be just incidental to be effective in providing habitat for deer, elk, wild turkey, neo-tropical migratory songbirds and other species which are dependent on this habitat type. While an acreage ceiling is an easy metric to measure success, the desired forest future condition should really determine the size of the timber harvest.

Additionally, the Association supports the proposed common-sense amendments to the Endangered Species Act. First, H.R. 2936 overturns the Cottonwood decision, which directs that if additional critical habitat is designated under an approved FP or RMP, a section 7 programmatic re-consultation of the entire FP needs to be done. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Obama Administration argued that the section 7 consultation needs only to be done on the project covering the additionally designated acreage of critical habitat. This remedy will greatly reduce the debilitating process that the federal court decision directs. Second, the bill affirms that no ESA section 7 consultation is required if the USFS or BLM determine during informal consultation that the proposed action is ''not likely to adversely affect a species or designated critical habitat'', which is already USFWS policy. And third, if any consultation on a categorical exclusion established by the bill is not concluded after 90 days, the action shall be considered to have not violated section 7(a)(2) of the ESA.

The Association is committed to working with our partners in the USFS and BLM to manage our federal forests to fulfill their public values as Congress mandated. HR 2936 makes significant improvements to and would expedite the process that governs approval of the USFS and BLM management plans. We urge that your Committee expeditiously report HR 2936 from the Committee to the House floor.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to move this bill quickly through the legislative process. If you have any questions, please contact AFWA Government affairs Director Jen Mock Schaeffer.

Sincerely,

NICK WILEY,
President, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies;
Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS,
Washington, DC, June 21, 2017.

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

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP: On behalf of the more than 140,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am writing to express NAHB's strong support for The Resilient National Forests Act of 2017 and express our appreciation to the House Committee on Natural Resources for continuing this important discussion on the health of our nation's forest. Better forest management practices that are also mindful of environmental considerations will help strengthen the housing supply chain and promote affordable housing opportunities for all Americans.

Significant concerns have been raised about the U.S. Forest Service's current forest management efforts, both in terms of administrative obstacles and legal obstacles in approving timber harvesting projects. Consequently, less commercial harvesting of timber has resulted in overgrown forests and an increased risk of catastrophic wildfire across the country.

Additional commercial harvesting of timber will promote the health of our nation's forest system, but also positively impact housing affordability. NAHB research shows lumber and wood products account for 15% of the cost of construction for a single family house. Lumber prices are generally volatile, and it is common for builders to encounter a large price swing in a short period of time. As additional supply is brought into the market, upward pressure on lumber prices will soften.

NAHB urges the House Natural Resources Committee to support The Resilient National Forests Act of 2017, which will encourage multi-use forest management practices for national forests and provide increases in the supply of federal timber products.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

JAMES W. TOBIN III.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, we need forest management reforms, we need them now. I thank Mr. WESTERMAN and the committee for their work on this bill, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I remember, 13 years ago, after another spate of catastrophic fires in the Western United States, we came together in a truly bipartisan fashion and passed something called the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. It authorized up to 20 million acres to be treated to remove

hazard fuels in what is called the WUI, the wildland-urban interface, and in threats to municipal water supplies. We also authorized $760 million a year.

Well, it has been 13 years. We authorized 20 million acres of work. What has been done? 2½ million.

Is it because of litigation, lawsuits, or, you know, obstruction? No. It is because of this body, the United States Congress, which is refusing to put up the money to do the work.

In my State alone, there are 1.8 million acres waiting for treatment. They have gone through all environmental reviews. There is no potential for litigation or any other blocking, but they don't have the money.

Does this bill fix that? No. We are addressing problems that don't exist in terms of addressing the wildfire problem.

This is really, you know, kind of a lost opportunity, a missed opportunity. Yes, it does a partial fix of the wildfire borrowing, which devastates the Forest Service every year. I appreciate that. But the fact is, we have got 44 million homes that are now at risk in terms of wildland-urban interface, and we have only treated 2½ million acres because this Congress isn't putting up the money.

□ 1600

And this year, yet again, they are proposing like one-half of what we authorized. What does one-half get you? It gets you half the acreage.

So if we had appropriated at the levels we authorized over the last 13 years, they would have treated 5 or 6 million acres. Again, they weren't blocked by litigation. They weren't blocked by appeals. The HFRA Act became virtually noncontroversial because it didn't do away with judicial review, which this bill will do on a certain number of projects in each region every year.

I wish that this was a bipartisan approach, it isn't, and I cannot support the legislation.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MCEACHIN).

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, the goal of forest management should be to make our forests more resilient—more resilient to the impacts of climate change, drought, and wildlife—but contrary to its title, H.R. 2936, the so-called Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, does not achieve these goals.

This bill includes exemptions from analyses required under the National Environmental Policy Act, restricts judicial review of certain forest management activities, amends the Equal Access to Justice Act to limit payment of attorneys' fees, and scales back the wildlife conservation efforts of the Endangered Species Act.

Mr. Chairman, this bill desperately needs improvement, and I am disappointed that my commonsense amendment—offered both in committee and again to Rules, this time with my colleague, Mr. BEYER from Virginia—is not being considered by the House.

My amendment would have struck two sections of this bill that are designed to allow approval of timber projects without adequate consideration of the impacts to some of the most vulnerable living creatures on Earth: those listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

The first offending section would put the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a 90-day shot clock to complete consultations required under section 7 of the ESA. Such a provision is both unnecessary and deeply harmful.

The second section my amendment would have struck is designed to prevent ESA consultation from happening altogether when FWS lists a new species or designates critical habitat for a listed species. This simply defies logic.

Getting ESA consultation right—and ensuring that it happens in the first place—is a small price to pay for preserving irreplaceable parts of our natural heritage.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 2936 attacks responsible forest management policy and promotes commercial logging at the expense of sound environmental review.

Instead of giving gifts to special interests, Congress should be addressing the effects of climate change, working to reduce the risk of wildfire, and fixing the wildfire budget.

Mr. Chairman, this bill takes us many steps in the wrong direction, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), who has sat through 2 years of discussions of the ideas from the Forest Service in creating this bill.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Chairman, 45 years ago, Congress enacted laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, that promised to improve the health of our forests. They imposed what have become endlessly time-consuming and, ultimately, cost-prohibitive restrictions on our ability to properly manage our national forests so that we can match the tree density with the ability of the land to support it.

I think after 45 years of experience with these laws, we are entitled to ask: How are our forests doing? The answer is damning. Our forests are now catastrophically overgrown, often carrying four times the number of trees that the land can support. In this stressed and weakened condition, our forests are easy prey for drought, disease, pestilence, and fire.

There is an old adage that excess timber comes out of the forest one way or the other—it is either carried out or it burns out. When we carried it out, we had resilient, healthy forests and a thriving economy, as excess timber was sold and harvested before it could choke our forests to death. In the years since then, we have seen an 80 percent decline in timber sales from our Federal lands and a concomitant increase in acreage destroyed by forest fire. I would remind my friend from Oregon that timber sales used to generate us money, not cost us money.

The direct revenues and spin-off commerce generated by these sales provided a stream of revenues that we could then use to improve our national forests and share with the local communities affected.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act begins to move us back towards sound and scientific forest management practices. It requires forest managers to consider the cost of no action alternatives; it streamlines fire and disease prevention programs and ensures that fire-killed timber can be quickly removed to create both revenues and room to restore fire-damaged lands; it ends the practice of raiding prevention funds to fight fires; it streamlines onerous environmental review processes without sacrificing environmental protection; and it provides our forest managers with alternatives to resolve frivolous lawsuits.

Provisions that streamline the environmental reviews were already signed into law last year for the Tahoe Basin, and the Forest Service regional manager told me that is going to take their revenue processes from 800 pages down to 40 pages and allow them to get their forest there back to a sustainable level.

We made some very big mistakes 45 years ago, and our forests have paid the price. This bill starts the long process of correcting those mistakes and recovering our national forests, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD two letters, one from the South Tahoe Public Utility District, and the second from the Public Lands Council and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, in support of H.R. 2936.

JUNE 22, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.
Hon. RAUL GRIJALVA,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP AND RANKING MEMBER GRIJALVA: As entities responsible for delivering sustainable water supply and renewable hydropower for millions of citizens throughout the western U.S., we are writing in support of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. National Forest lands are the largest single source of water in the U.S. and in some regions of the west contribute nearly 50% of the overall water supply that supports our farms and cities. The current, unhealthy state of these forests, which contain some of the nation's most valuable watersheds, increases the threat of catastrophic wildfires. These high intensity wildfires jeopardize the reliability, volume and quality of water for tens of millions of

Americans, along with the wildlife, recreational, and multi-purpose value of these lands.

The H.R. 2936 supports collaborative forest management, streamlines the environmental review process, addresses the unsustainable practice of fire borrowing, and includes an innovative arbitration process. We believe it is critical that both forest management reforms and resolution of the ''fire borrowing'' issue are addressed in any legislation to ensure on-the-ground forest restoration activities can proceed at the pace and scale of the problem.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and urge prompt passage of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION.
UTAH WATER USERS ASSOCIATION.
ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES.
PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY.
SOUTH TAHOE PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT.

JUNE 27, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee, Washington, DC.
Hon. RAUL GRIJALVA,
Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP AND RANKING MEMBER GRIJALVA: The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) strongly support H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, introduced by Rep. Bruce Westerman (R–Ark.). PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's largest and oldest national marketing and trade association, representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act will expedite environmental reviews and assessments for the removal of dead trees and set deadlines for reforestation projects to occur. Such changes ensure forests are no longer neglected and establish a healthier management pattern. Further, this legislation discourages frivolous litigation by requiring litigants who oppose a management project to come to the table with an alternative, rather than just tying up agency time and resources in court. The bill provides an incentive for collaborative efforts between local governments, local stakeholders and federal land management agencies. Finally, the legislation prevents ''fire borrowing'' and stops federal agencies from raiding accounts necessary for proper forest and range management.

The severe mismanagement of federally-owned forests and rangelands, due to outdated environmental laws and regulations along with the abuse of the legal system by radical special interest groups, creates devastating economic hardship and danger for our members and rural communities across the west. The livestock industry and rural economies will spend decades attempting to recover from millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure damage and forage loss that have been the result of catastrophic wildfires in recent years, not to mention the loss of valuable wildlife habitats.

It is scientifically proven that proper timber management and rangeland management through grazing is the key to maintaining healthy forests and preventing catastrophic wildfires. However, according to the BLM, livestock grazing has been reduced on BLM lands by as much as 50 percent since 1971, while the timber industry has been all but destroyed over the last 30 years, due almost entirely to federal laws and regulations and predatory environmental groups. Restrictions have allowed the accumulation of fuel, increasing risk of wildfires and leading to harm of forest ecosystems and western communities—the watershed, wildlife, air quality, rural communities and the taxpayers are all negatively impacted.

PLC and NCBA believe that H.R. 2936 is a positive step forward to returning management flexibility and fiscal responsibility to the federal land management agencies. PLC and NCBA appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members—the nation's food and fiber producers. H.R. 2936 is proactive, common sense legislation, and we would encourage the committee to pass the bill out of committee without delay.

Sincerely,

DAVE ELIASON,
President, Public Lands Council.
CRAIG UDEN,
President, National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, this bill that we are debating today has been touted as Congress' solution to the longstanding issue of fire borrowing that has plagued the Forest Service.

I represent a district that has experienced a lot of wildfire. Thankfully, the recent devastating fires in the North Bay were not caused by this fire-borrowing issue. They did not involve Federal public lands. However, I have had a lot of wildfire in my district over the years, and fire borrowing is a top priority for me. Unfortunately, as it is currently written, this bill introduces more problems than solutions on this issue. Let me explain.

The title in the bill pertaining to fire borrowing repurposes the Stafford Act, which Congress enacted to provide assistance to State and local governments in case of emergencies. This requires Congress to appropriate the 10-year average for wildfire suppression before the Forest Service can access emergency funds. That is not the way to solve this problem. In fact, I saw that just yesterday the administration issued a SAP because of this problematic provision.

If Congress is serious about fixing the budget issue, we should be making funds available ahead of an emergency situation, and we should remove the cost of fighting catastrophic fires from the agency's base budget. That will enable them to invest in proactive measures to make our forests more resilient and healthy.

Although the Rules Committee added title XI to this bill, which increased the overall cap for disaster spending, the problems with using the Stafford Act approach still remain.

The second point. This bill, essentially, is a gutting of environmental protections and an attack on sustainable forest management that threatens equal access to justice. We should just call it what it is.

Title I of this bill allows intensive logging projects of 10,000 to 30,000 acres each. That is as big as the entire city of San Francisco. Projects of that size can proceed on Federal public lands without any environmental review under NEPA, without any compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

Title II of the bill eliminates the requirement that the Forest Service consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service and, essentially, let's the Forest Service decide for itself if it wants to follow the Endangered Species Act consultation requirements regarding any of its projects on public lands.

Title III further chokes judicial review by prohibiting the recovery of attorneys' fees for any challenges to forest management activity under the Equal Access to Justice Act, including meritorious successful challenges. This severely limits public review of logging projects on Federal public lands.

How would any of these measures promote forest health? It wouldn't. So let's call this bill what it is. It is an environmental wrecking ball that weakens standards and protections, limits public participation in the review of Federal agency actions, and won't make our forests any healthier or safer.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chairman, I rise for the purpose of engaging in a colloquy with the chairman to seek a clarification on the applicability of the provisions in title I and title II of this bill to national forest lands.

As my colleagues know, the State of California has been on fire. We have all seen the devastation across the State, ranging from the Sierra Nevada to the Bay area, and even the wine country. Even today, CalFire and Forest Service personnel remain deployed on fires across the State.

Ensuring that the Forest Service returns to active management of our forests is critical to promoting forest health and helping reduce the risks and likeliness of catastrophic wildfires that we have seen already this year.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act includes what I believe to be critically important reforms to forest management, such as expedited environmental reviews and availability of categorical exclusion for forest management activities, to help achieve these needed goals.

In California, there are six national monuments managed by the Forest Service or jointly between the Forest Service and BLM. Oftentimes, management activities in these areas are highly restricted, which only leads to hazardous fuels buildup and increased risk

of catastrophic fires. We see the results every year in the West.

H.R. 2936 clearly identifies certain national forest lands that these provisions do not apply to. This includes wilderness areas, national or State inventoried roadless areas, or areas where timber harvesting is prohibited by statute.

However, it is my belief that provisions of this bill, Mr. Chairman—based on the definition of National Forest System lands in the bill—apply to all other Forest Service lands not explicitly prohibited in the bill.

Respectfully, I would like to clarify with the chairman that it is his intent that provisions in title I and title II of H.R. 2936 apply to all other Federal lands managed by the United States Forest Service. This includes national monuments managed by the Forest Service.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for his work on this critical bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague from California for his work on forestry issues and understand the importance this bill has to forestry management in his state.

It is my intent, and I believe the intent of my colleagues, that all provisions of H.R. 2936, including title I and title II, unless explicitly excluded, apply to national monuments and all other lands managed by the United States Forest Service.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time is remaining on both sides.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. WILLIAMS). The gentleman from Arizona has 3 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Utah has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON).

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague from Arkansas, Mr. WESTERMAN, for his hard work on the Resilient Federal Forests Act.

I would like to be able to submit that if you actually care about helping our forests, if you care about our watersheds, if you care about wildlife habitat, if you care about outdoor recreation, if you care about responsible job development, if you care about being able to provide funding for our schools, this is a piece of legislation to be able to try and achieve a win-win-win, literally, for our communities.

We have seen 7 million acres, Mr. Chairman, burn in the West in 2017 alone. We have seen our forests devastated. We have seen over half of the budget of the Forest Service being used to fight forest fires.

Is there a better way?

The better way can be found in this piece of legislation, to be able to not only address what we must address, in terms of fighting forest fires when they break out, but also to be able to have a responsible, proactive management forest to be able to make sure that we are creating healthy forests.

Mr. Chairman, as I travel throughout my district, I am now looking at forests that my great-grandchildren will not see as I saw them as a young boy growing up. It is time that we actually have legislation that doesn't just be reactive to the problem that we face when it comes to forest management but be proactive. This legislation will achieve that goal.

And, again, I applaud Mr. WESTERMAN and the Committee on Natural Resources for their hard work on this.

□ 1615

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As we have talked about H.R. 2936, this is something that has been before two previous Congresses and went nowhere; and as a consequence, we continue to not confront the issue of appropriate and necessary funding for the Forest Service to conduct wildfire suppression. That is the gap in this. This flawed attempt to try to fix the funding issue does not.

In fact, Congress has provided appropriate tools to conduct restoration, reduce hazardous fuels, and restore ecological balance on national forest and public lands.

Congress should fix the wildfire budget—that is the issue—not use this as leverage to subsidize the timber industry and also overturn essential environmental laws.

This legislation has an attack on NEPA, has an attack on the Endangered Species Act, has an attack on judicial review and access to justice, has an attack on the Antiquities Act, and continues the process of fire borrowing.

H.R. 2936 is not about forest health or reducing wildfire risk. It is intended to make it easier to advance commercial logging and sales on our national forests and public lands.

A flawed attempt to fix the wildfire funding problem, it does nothing to change the anti-environmental provisions in the underlying bill.

We have a serious issue, validated because of all the studies that have been done, including GAO, which found that climate change is a contributor, scientists have found that climate change is a contributor. That is not discussed because that is a hoax, my Republican colleagues say, created by the Chinese. So we will not talk about climate change as a major factor, which it is, to the increasing intensity and length of wildfires across our public lands and across private and State lands as well.

This legislation is about undermining environmental law. It does nothing about the funding necessary to fight wildfires in this country. It does nothing about involving the stakeholders in proactive restoration and reducing the threat of wildfire in this country.

Mr. Chair, I urge a ''no'' vote on H.R. 2936, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I am amazed at how critical people have been about the experts of the Forest Service, as if people don't realize that these provisions in Mr. WESTERMAN's bill weren't coming out of thin air. Somebody told us the tools they need to deal with this.

Mr. Chair, may I also add, there are still other issues which we will work out when we get to the Senate on these, some that Mr. GOHMERT presented. We will still work on those issues.

Mr. Chair, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the author of this bill, the only Member on the floor who has a degree in forestry.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman BISHOP for his tireless efforts to see our government do better on our Federal lands.

Mr. Chairman, I recently made a trip out to Montana to visit some of our National Forests and the rural communities they border. These forests, much like many areas across our country, have been mismanaged for decades, and the ones that have not already been destroyed are ripe to be devastated by insects, disease, or catastrophic wildfire, not because of some action taken by the Forest Service, but just the opposite. Because of no actions, our forests are overstocked, underutilized, and unhealthy.

We have seen nearly 9 million acres of forest, an area larger than the State of Maryland, go up in flames just this year, spewing tens of millions of tons of carbon and thick smoke into the atmosphere.

Don't get me wrong. 32,000 full-time Forest Service personnel are busy and working hard trying to manage the 193 million acres of timberland across our great country, but they are spinning their wheels and making very little progress.

Mr. Chairman, that is a forest the size of Texas and South Carolina combined. According to scientists at the Forest Service, 80 million acres of that, an area the size of the State of New Mexico, is in a condition that is subject to catastrophic wildfire.

These fires are not only creating a forest health crisis, they are a public health crisis. They kill trees, they kill wildlife and livestock. These fires not only kill livelihoods, they create unbearable health concerns and living conditions with their thick smoke and ash. On top of all that, they are killing people.

It shouldn't be this way and it doesn't have to be this way.

This bill simply allows sound, scientifically-based forestry practices, like the ones I learned at Yale's Forestry School, to be implemented on our Federal forests. It will result in cleaner air, cleaner water, better wildlife habitat, better recreational opportunities, more plant and animal biodiversity, stronger economies, and fewer fires, resulting in lower fire costs.

As we traveled through the beautiful countryside of Montana, I saw the symbol of our Nation perched majestically atop a tree by the bank of a clear and flowing stream. This bald eagle reminded me of a fable by Aesop that described our situation today. It goes like this:

An eagle was soaring through the sky, when suddenly it heard the whiz of an arrow and it felt itself wounded to death. Slowly it fluttered down to the Earth, with its lifeblood pouring out of it. Looking down upon the arrow with which it had been pierced, it found that the haft of the arrow had been feathered with one of its own plumes.

''Alas!'' it cried, as it died, ''We often give our enemies the means for our own destruction.''

Mr. Chairman, our enemies aren't our colleagues across the aisle. Many support this bill and some are cosponsors. Our enemies are not environmental extremists that are impeding science and causing some people to love our trees to death. Our enemy is not even the United States Senate.

Mr. Chairman, our enemy is catastrophic wildfire that destroys our forests. Our enemies are insects and diseases that kill our trees, and we are feathering their arrows with inaction. We are feathering their arrows with bureaucratic red tape. We are feathering their arrows with poor policy that are killing our forests, killing our communities, and killing us every day.

How much longer will we stand by and do nothing?

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get behind this bill, pass it out of the House, and join me in relentlessly encouraging the Senate to take action.

Our forests, our rural communities, our environment, and all those areas, urban and rural alike, that are breathing the smoke and ash of our once magnificent forests need us to act.

Every day that we delay, the problem gets worse and the enemies of the forest are gaining ground. Please join me in this fight and pass this bill.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD two letters. The first is from eight groups, including the Archery Trade Association; the second is from the National Association of State Foresters, both in support of H.R. 2936.

JUNE 26, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee, Washington, DC.
Hon. RAUL GRIJALVA,
Ranking Democrat, House Natural Resources Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP AND CONG. GRIJALVA: Our organizations which represent millions of hunters, anglers, recreational shooters and other conservationists express our strong support for H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. We respectfully urge you to take expeditious Committee action on H.R. 2936, which if enacted, will improve the health of our federal forests and reduce costly wildfires. Our nation's federal lands play a vital role in maintaining healthy forests that are resilient to threats at a landscape level from fire, pests, disease and insects. Through incentives and expedited process, consistent with informed science, the bill will help ensure that timber harvest and the creation of young forest habitat for wildlife remains viable on US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. Additionally, it remedies the budget fire-funding problem (borrowing from other line items) that our country faces when fighting catastrophic wildfires.

Our organizations much appreciate that the fire-funding problem is addressed in HR 2936. While most catastrophic fires occur in the western United States, this is a national problem because the funds for every national forest and public land unit are affected. This remedy will prevent the USFS and BLM from having to borrow from other appropriated budget line-items (for example, wildfire prevention, wildlife, recreation and water quality) to pay for the cost of catastrophic fire suppression, which cost now consumes over 50% of the USFS budget. We respectfully urge the Committee to further protect the USFS budget by capping the 10-year average of catastrophic fire costs at its current level. The USFS uses this 10-year average to build their budget request for the President. The 10-year average continues to rise and unless it is capped it will continue to erode other important budget line items such as wildlife, water quality, fire prevention and recreation as the USFS constructs its budget request.

All forest management plans are conducted with public input, and all projects undergo National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. The bill's use of the Categorical Exclusion (CE) under the NEPA rules from the Council on Environmental Quality, will allow routine projects with known effects to be implemented more efficiently and cost-effectively to achieve the forest's desired future condition, as outlined in the forest management plan. Certain forest management treatments previously analyzed under NEPA in order to deal with issues such as pests and disease, hazardous fuels, critical habitats for threatened or endangered species, salvage facilitation, and water quality, do not need reanalysis on each similar project. These projects are routine, reoccurring activities with known effects, already fully analyzed and therefore qualify for CEs from repeated analysis.

We also appreciate the increase in acreage ceilings for the statutorily endorsed CEs. Early successional stage forest habitat, for instance, cannot be just incidental to be effective in providing habitat for deer, ruffed grouse, elk, wild turkey, neo-tropical migratory songbirds and other species which are dependent on this habitat type. While an acreage ceiling is an easy metric to measure success, the desired forest future condition should really determine the size of the management activity. Additionally, as stated in the bill, all CEs must avoid sensitive areas and must be consistent with standards and guidelines in approved Forest Plans.

Our organizations appreciate changes made to make more prominent in federal statute the states' authority to manage fish and wildlife on USFS and BLM lands. Nothing in the bill language is intended to change any existing federal, state or tribal authority. It simply makes more evident the state-federal jurisdictional relationship which Congress has affirmed. Federal-state cooperation in this arena is compelled because the USFS and BLM own the land and thus the habitat, and the state fish and wildlife agencies manage the fish and wildlife. Robust cooperation will provide that both land/habitat objectives and fish and wildlife population objectives are met.

Additionally, our groups support the proposed common-sense amendments to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). First, the bill overturns the Cottonwood decision, which directs that if additional critical habitat is designated under an approved forest plan or resource management plan, a section 7 programmatic re-consultation of the entire forest plan needs to be done. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Obama Administration argued that the section 7 consultation needs only to be done on the portion of the project covering the additionally designated acreage of critical habitat. This remedy will greatly reduce the debilitating process that the federal court decision directs. Second, the bill affirms that no ESA section 7 consultation is required if the USFS or BLM determine during informal consultation that the proposed action is ''not likely to adversely affect a species or designated critical habitat'', which is already USFWS policy. And third, if any consultation on a categorical exclusion established by the bill is not concluded after 90 days, the action shall be considered to have not violated section 7(a)(2) of the ESA.

We also support the bill's provisions expediting large scale restoration after catastrophic wildfires. We likewise support the prohibition on restraining orders and preliminary injunctions. It is imperative that we work to restore wildfire-impacted lands for the ecological health of the immediate area and surrounding landscape, protection of the watershed, and economic vitality of the local communities.

Our organizations further appreciate the process relief provided to National Forest Plans and potentially Resources Management Plans developed by collaborative deliberation. It is appropriate that a collaborative-developed plan, which often takes years to deliberate and conclude, be subject to only two options under NEPA, proceed or not proceed. It is very reasonable to assume that the collaboratively deliberated process has examined and rejected the other options, and only the action or no action alternatives need be analyzed.

The bill's establishment of a pilot binding arbitration process as an alternative to litigation in each Forest Service Region is certainly welcomed. Not only is the cost of defending the land management plan a burden on the agencies, but the planned for management work on the ground is lost, perhaps never to be resurrected on that site. We find much merit in this improved approach as an alternative to the proposal in H.R. 2647 from the last Congress, and commend Cong. Westerman and the Committee for settling on this. Uninformed litigation has led to federal forest management by the federal courts; we need to return forest management to the federal and state professionals with public input as provided for by the established processes.

H.R. 2936 makes significant improvements to and would expedite the process that governs approval of the USFS and BLM management plans. We urge that your Committee expeditiously report this bill from the Committee to the House floor. We look forward to continuing to work with you to move this bill quickly through the legislative process.

Thank you for your consideration of our community's perspectives.

Archery Trade Association, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, (Boone and Crockett Club, Catch-a-Dream Foundation, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Conservation Force, Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, Delta Waterfowl, Houston Safari Club, Mule Deer Foundation, National Association of Forest Service Retirees, National Rifle Association.

National Shooting Sports Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, Professional Outfitters and Guides Association, Public

Lands Foundation, Quality Deer Management Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ruffed Grouse Society, Safari Club International, Whitetails Unlimited, Wild Sheep Foundation, Wildlife Forever, Wildlife Management Institute, Wildlife Mississippi.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS,
Washington, DC, June 13, 2017.

Chairman ROB BISHOP,
House Natural Resources Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Ranking Member RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,
House Natural Resources Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP AND RANKING MEMBER GRIJALVA: The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is pleased to provide comments on the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. NASF represents the heads of state forestry agencies in all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the US Territories. Through the development of comprehensive State Forest Action Plans our members maintain a broad view of the full set of forestry ownerships within their authority, including federally owned forest lands. For citizens of the United States to realize a full set of forest related benefits, federal lands need to provide a complete and balanced set of environmental, economic and social values.

In February of 2016 our organization adopted a formal position on desired reforms to federal land management policy. Suggestions are organized around:

Reforms that would allow federal lands to develop a more balanced set of social, environmental and economic benefits;

Reforms that would lower the costs of agency administration, planning, regulatory compliance and litigation, and

Reforms that would enable vegetation management to be carried out at a scope, scale and pace sufficient to create more sustainable and resilient landscape conditions.

We feel this bill would indeed create the end results our members support as our members want to see more active management of federal forest lands. Expedited planning and analysis, prompt response to catastrophic events, alternative dispute resolution, greater collaboration and less costly litigation are all outcomes that for which we strongly advocate. In addition, we're encouraged to see some desired modification to Good Neighbor Authority allowing road repair to be part of cooperative projects, as well as support for giving the land management agencies the opportunity to make their own determinations of endangered species jeopardy or adverse effects. Finally, NASF appreciates that this discussion draft recognizes the need to solve the wildfire suppression funding issue. We look forward to working with the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands and Congressman Bruce Westerman to ensure that a solution addresses both fire borrowing and the erosion of the Forest Service's budget overtime due to increasing wildfire suppression costs.

We recently provided comments on federal land management reform to the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. One additional suggestion we made there and would repeat here is to ''Require that National Forest Management Plans specifically address how they support State Forest Action Plans. In addition, encourage regular consultation with State Foresters by National Forest System leadership to ensure their annual programs of work are dovetailed where appropriate.''

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We would be happy to answer any questions or provide any additional information that might be of assistance.

Sincerely,

BILL CRAPSER,
Wyoming State Forester,
President of the National Association of State Foresters.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chair, I voted for last Congress' version of this bill, one of 19 Democrats to do so. It wasn't perfect, but the bill was step in the right direction. I hoped the Senate would improve it and we would finally make needed changes forest management and fix ''fire borrowing.'' But the Senate never acted on it, or on any other forest management bill.

In the 113th Congress, I worked with Reps. Schrader and Walden and crafted a bipartisan bill to create a long-term solution to properly manage statutorily unique forestlands in Western Oregon. It would have devoted nearly 1.3 million acres for sustainable timber production for local mills, created thousands of private sector jobs, and provided much-needed revenue for our rural counties. The legislation was included in a larger bill which passed the House in September 2014. Again, the Senate failed to act.

Like last Congress, there are provisions in this bill I support. However, there are provisions that I cannot support. For example, the bill doubles the amount of acres exempt from nearly all environmental analysis for projects up to 10,000 acres, and in some cases 30,000 acres, nearly 47 square miles.

I agree there is a need to need to increase the pace and size of forest restoration projects. But the Forest Service and BLM already have many tools to accomplish more management objectives. What they need is funding to complete projects. In fact, Forest Service NEPA experts have initiated a comprehensive review to determine opportunities, already allowed under law, to increase efficiencies and management tools to expedite environmental review, including proposing new categorical exclusions.

It's true that in some cases the Forest Service and BLM don't use authority they have because of legitimate concerns about the threat of litigation and the accompanying expenses it incurs. But it is disingenuous for us to claim that this bill, or any forest management bill, is a miraculous fix to harvest more timber, improve forest restoration, or reduce fuels to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires, without Congress providing funding to do so. In fact, according to the Forest Service, in Oregon there are over 1.8 million acres of treatment projects that are ''shovel ready,'' meaning all environmental analysis has been completed. But they stay on the shelf, because the Forest Service doesn't have the funds to complete them.

We've all seen the destruction from this year's severe fire season. Homes and businesses were destroyed, and dozens of lives were lost in Northern California. In my district, over 300,000 acres burned. The Forest Service says that nationally there are now more than 44 million homes are within the Wildland Urban Interface, at high risk of burning in a wildfire.

In 2004, Congress passed, on a bipartisan basis, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, which if properly implemented would go a long way to reduce the threat of wildfires in our communities. It authorized up to 20 million acres to be treated to remove hazard fuels in the Wildland and Urban Interface, as well as protect municipal water supplies from catastrophic wildfires. We authorized $760 million annually to perform the work. So far, thirteen years later, only 2.5 million acres have been treated.

Why is that? We have never come close to appropriating enough funding to get the job done. In Fiscal Year 2017, Congress appropriated $390 million for hazardous fuels reduction.

As always, I stand ready to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to improve forest management and help our rural communities get back on their feet. But it must be balanced approach. Unfortunately, this bill is not a balanced approach.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

In lieu of the amendments in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Natural Resources, printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–36. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 2936

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Definitions.
Sec. 3. Rule of application for National Forest System lands and public lands.

TITLE I—EXPEDITED ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS TO EXPEDITE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Subtitle A—Analysis of Proposed Collaborative Forest Management Activities

Sec. 101. Analysis of only two alternatives (action versus no action) in proposed collaborative forest management activities.

Subtitle B—Categorical Exclusions

Sec. 111. Categorical exclusion to expedite certain critical response actions.
Sec. 112. Categorical exclusion to expedite salvage operations in response to catastrophic events.
Sec. 113. Categorical exclusion to meet forest plan goals for early successional forests.
Sec. 114. Categorical exclusion for road side projects.
Sec. 115. Categorical exclusion to improve or restore National Forest System Lands or public land or reduce the risk of wildfire.

Subtitle C—General Provisions for Forest Management Activities

Sec. 121. Compliance with forest plans.
Sec. 122. Consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act.

Sec. 123. Consultation under the Endangered Species Act.
Sec. 124. Forest management activities considered non-discretionary actions.
TITLE II—SALVAGE AND REFORESTATION IN RESPONSE TO CATASTROPHIC EVENTS
Sec. 201. Expedited salvage operations and reforestation activities following large-scale catastrophic events.
Sec. 202. Compliance with forest plan.
Sec. 203. Prohibition on restraining orders, preliminary injunctions, and injunctions pending appeal.
TITLE III—FOREST MANAGEMENT LITIGATION
Subtitle A—General Litigation Provisions
Sec. 301. No attorney fees for forest management activity challenges.
Sec. 302. Injunctive relief.
Subtitle B—Forest Management Activity Arbitration Pilot Program
Sec. 311. Use of arbitration instead of litigation to address challenges to forest management activities.
TITLE IV—SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT AMENDMENTS
Sec. 401. Use of reserved funds for title II projects on Federal land and certain non-Federal land.
Sec. 402. Resource advisory committees.
Sec. 403. Program for title II self-sustaining resource advisory committee projects.
Sec. 404. Additional authorized use of reserved funds for title III county projects.
Sec. 405. Treatment as supplemental funding.
TITLE V—STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING
Sec. 501. Cancellation ceilings for stewardship end result contracting projects.
Sec. 502. Excess offset value.
Sec. 503. Payment of portion of stewardship project revenues to county in which stewardship project occurs.
Sec. 504. Submission of existing annual report.
Sec. 505. Fire liability provision.
Sec. 506. Extension of stewardship contracting maximum term limits.
TITLE VI—ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
Sec. 601. Definitions.
Sec. 602. Availability of stewardship project revenues and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund to cover forest management activity planning costs.
Sec. 603. State-supported planning of forest management activities.
TITLE VII—TRIBAL FORESTRY PARTICIPATION AND PROTECTION
Sec. 701. Protection of Tribal forest assets through use of stewardship end result contracting and other authorities.
Sec. 702. Management of Indian forest land authorized to include related National Forest System lands and public lands.
Sec. 703. Tribal forest management demonstration project.
Sec. 704. Rule of application.
TITLE VIII— EXPEDITING INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION
Subtitle A—Forest Plans Not Considered Major Federal Actions
Sec. 801. Forest plans not considered major Federal actions.
Subtitle B—Agency Consultation
Sec. 811. Consultation under Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974.
Sec. 812. Consultation under Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.
TITLE IX—MISCELLANEOUS
Subtitle A—Forest Management Provisions
Sec. 901. Clarification of existing categorical exclusion authority related to insect and disease infestation.
Sec. 902. Revision of alternate consultation agreement regulations.
Sec. 903. Revision of extraordinary circumstances regulations.
Sec. 904. Conditions on Forest Service road decommissioning.
Sec. 905. Prohibition on application of Eastside Screens requirements on National Forest System lands.
Sec. 906. Use of site-specific forest plan amendments for certain projects and activities.
Sec. 907. Knutson-Vandenberg Act modifications.
Sec. 908. Application of Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standard and Guidelines.
Sec. 909. Reconstruction and repair included in good neighbor agreements.
Sec. 910. Logging and mechanized operations.
Subtitle B—Oregon and California Railroad Grant Lands and Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant Lands
Sec. 911. Amendments to the Act of August 28, 1937.
Sec. 912. Oregon and California Railroad Grant Lands and Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands permanent rights of access.
Sec. 913. Management of Bureau of Land Management lands in Western Oregon.
Subtitle C—Timber Innovation
Sec. 921. Definitions.
Sec. 922. Clarification of research and development program for wood building construction.
TITLE X—MAJOR DISASTER FOR WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LAND
Sec. 1001. Wildfire on Federal lands.
Sec. 1002. Declaration of a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands.
Sec. 1003. Prohibition on transfers.
TITLE XI—DISASTER RELIEF AND WILDFIRE ADJUSTMENT
Sec. 1101. Increase in maximum adjustment to accommodate wildfire funding.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In titles I through IX:

(1) CATASTROPHIC EVENT.—The term ''catastrophic event'' means any natural disaster (such as hurricane, tornado, windstorm, snow or ice storm, rain storm, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, drought, or insect or disease outbreak) or any fire, flood, or explosion, regardless of cause.

(2) COLLABORATIVE PROCESS.—The term ''collaborative process'' refers to a process relating to the management of National Forest System lands or public lands by which a project or forest management activity is developed and implemented by the Secretary concerned through collaboration with interested persons, as described in section 603(b)(1)(C) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(b)(1)(C)).

(3) COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN.—The term ''community wildfire protection plan'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

(4) COOS BAY WAGON ROAD GRANT LANDS.—The term ''Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands'' means the lands reconveyed to the United States pursuant to the first section of the Act of February 26, 1919 (40 Stat. 1179).

(5) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY.—The term ''forest management activity'' means a project or activity carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands consistent with the forest plan covering the lands.

(6) FOREST PLAN.—The term ''forest plan'' means—

(A) a land use plan prepared by the Bureau of Land Management for public lands pursuant to section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712); or

(B) a land and resource management plan prepared by the Forest Service for a unit of the National Forest System pursuant to section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604).

(7) LARGE-SCALE CATASTROPHIC EVENT.—The term ''large-scale catastrophic event'' means a catastrophic event that adversely impacts at least 5,000 acres of reasonably contiguous National Forest System lands or public lands, as determined by the Secretary concerned.

(8) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—The term ''National Forest System'' has the meaning given that term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(9) OREGON AND CALIFORNIA RAILROAD GRANT LANDS.—The term ''Oregon and California Railroad Grant lands'' means the following lands:

(A) All lands in the State of Oregon revested in the United States under the Act of June 9, 1916 (39 Stat. 218), that are administered by the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to the first section of the Act of August 28, 1937 (43 U.S.C. 1181a).

(B) All lands in that State obtained by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the land exchanges authorized and directed by section 2 of the Act of June 24, 1954 (43 U.S.C. 1181h).

(C) All lands in that State acquired by the United States at any time and made subject to the provisions of title II of the Act of August 28, 1937 (43 U.S.C. 1181f).

(10) PUBLIC LANDS.—The term ''public lands'' has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702), except that the term includes Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands and Oregon and California Railroad Grant lands.

(11) REFORESTATION ACTIVITY.—The term ''reforestation activity'' means a project or forest management activity carried out by the Secretary concerned whose primary purpose is the reforestation of impacted lands following a large-scale catastrophic event. The term includes planting, evaluating and enhancing natural regeneration, clearing competing vegetation, and other activities related to reestablishment of forest species on the impacted lands.

(12) RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The term ''resource advisory committee'' has the meaning given that term in section 201 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7121).

(13) SALVAGE OPERATION.—The term ''salvage operation'' means a forest management activity and restoration activities carried out in response to a catastrophic event where the primary purpose is—

(A) to prevent wildfire as a result of the catastrophic event, or, if the catastrophic event was wildfire, to prevent a re-burn of the fire-impacted area;

(B) to provide an opportunity for utilization of forest materials damaged as a result of the catastrophic event; or

(C) to provide a funding source for reforestation and other restoration activities for the National Forest System lands or public lands impacted by the catastrophic event.

(14) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term ''Secretary concerned'' means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands.

SEC. 3. RULE OF APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS AND PUBLIC LANDS.

Unless specifically provided by a provision of titles I through IX, the authorities provided by such titles do not apply with respect to any National Forest System lands or public lands—

(1) that are included in the National Wilderness Preservation System;

(2) that are located within a national or State-specific inventoried roadless area established by the Secretary of Agriculture through regulation, unless—

(A) the forest management activity to be carried out under such authority is consistent with the forest plan applicable to the area; or

(B) the Secretary concerned determines the activity is allowed under the applicable roadless rule governing such lands; or

(3) on which timber harvesting for any purpose is prohibited by Federal statute.

TITLE I—EXPEDITED ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS TO EXPEDITE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Subtitle A—Analysis of Proposed Collaborative Forest Management Activities

SEC. 101. ANALYSIS OF ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES (ACTION VERSUS NO ACTION) IN PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) APPLICATION TO CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS.—This section shall apply whenever the Secretary concerned prepares an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement pursuant to section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332) for a forest management activity that—

(1) is developed through a collaborative process;

(2) is proposed by a resource advisory committee;

(3) will occur on lands identified by the Secretary concerned as suitable for timber production;

(4) will occur on lands designated by the Secretary (or designee thereof) pursuant to section 602(b) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591a(b)), notwithstanding whether such forest management activity is initiated prior to September 30, 2018; or

(5) is covered by a community wildfire protection plan.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES.—In an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement described in subsection (a), the Secretary concerned shall study, develop, and describe only the following two alternatives:

(1) The forest management activity.

(2) The alternative of no action.

(c) ELEMENTS OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE.—In the case of the alternative of no action, the Secretary concerned shall consider whether to evaluate—

(1) the effect of no action on—

(A) forest health;

(B) habitat diversity;

(C) wildfire potential;

(D) insect and disease potential; and

(E) timber production; and

(2) the implications of a resulting decline in forest health, loss of habitat diversity, wildfire, or insect or disease infestation, given fire and insect and disease historic cycles, on—

(A) domestic water supply in the project area;

(B) wildlife habitat loss; and

(C) other economic and social factors.

Subtitle B—Categorical Exclusions

SEC. 111. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO EXPEDITE CERTAIN CRITICAL RESPONSE ACTIONS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands where the primary purpose of such activity is—

(1) to address an insect or disease infestation;

(2) to reduce hazardous fuel loads;

(3) to protect a municipal water source;

(4) to maintain, enhance, or modify critical habitat to protect it from catastrophic disturbances;

(5) to increase water yield;

(6) produce timber; or

(7) any combination of the purposes specified in paragraphs (1) through (6).

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) ACREAGE LIMITATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except in the case of a forest management activity described in paragraph (2), a forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 10,000 acres.

(2) LARGER AREAS AUTHORIZED.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may contain treatment units exceeding a total of 10,000 acres but not more than a total of 30,000 acres if the forest management activity—

(A) is developed through a collaborative process;

(B) is proposed by a resource advisory committee; or

(C) is covered by a community wildfire protection plan.

SEC. 112. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO EXPEDITE SALVAGE OPERATIONS IN RESPONSE TO CATASTROPHIC EVENTS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Salvage operations carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(c) ACREAGE LIMITATION.—A salvage operation covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 10,000 acres.

(d) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) STREAM BUFFERS.—A salvage operation covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) shall comply with the standards and guidelines for stream buffers contained in the applicable forest plan unless waived by the Regional Forester, in the case of National Forest System lands, or the State Director of the Bureau of Land Management, in the case of public lands.

(2) REFORESTATION PLAN.—A reforestation plan shall be developed under section 3 of the Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the Knutson-Vandenberg Act; 16 U.S.C. 576b), as part of a salvage operation covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a).

SEC. 113. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO MEET FOREST PLAN GOALS FOR EARLY SUCCESSIONAL FORESTS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands where the primary purpose of such activity is to modify, improve, enhance, or create early successional forests for wildlife habitat improvement and other purposes, consistent with the applicable forest plan.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) PROJECT GOALS.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary concerned shall design a forest management activity under this section to meet early successional forest goals in such a manner so as to maximize production and regeneration of priority species, as identified in the forest plan and consistent with the capability of the activity site.

(e) ACREAGE LIMITATIONS.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 10,000 acres.

SEC. 114. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR ROAD SIDE PROJECTS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Projects carried out by the Secretary concerned to remove hazard trees or to salvage timber for purposes of the protection of public health or safety, water supply, or public infrastructure are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(c) HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW.—A project that is categorically excluded under this section shall be subject to the requirements of subsections (d), (e), and (f) of section 603 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591).

(2) HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION ON FEDERAL LAND.—A project that is categorically excluded under this section shall be subject to the requirements of sections 102, 104, 105, and 106 of title I of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511 et seq.).

SEC. 115. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO IMPROVE OR RESTORE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS OR PUBLIC LAND OR REDUCE THE RISK OF WILDFIRE.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities described in paragraph (2) that are carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System Lands or public lands where the primary purpose of such activity is to improve or restore such lands or reduce the risk of wildfire on those lands.

(2) ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED.—The follow activities may be carried out pursuant to the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a):

(A) Removal of juniper trees, medusahead rye, conifer trees, piñon pine trees, cheatgrass, and other noxious or invasive weeds specified on Federal or State noxious weeds lists through late-season livestock grazing, targeted livestock grazing, prescribed burns, and mechanical treatments.

(B) Performance of hazardous fuels management.

(C) Creation of fuel and fire breaks.

(D) Modification of existing fences in order to distribute livestock and help improve wildlife habitat.

(E) Installation of erosion control devices.

(F) Construction of new and maintenance of permanent infrastructure, including stock ponds, water catchments, and water spring boxes used to benefit livestock and improve wildlife habitat.

(G) Performance of soil treatments, native and non-native seeding, and planting of and transplanting sagebrush, grass, forb, shrub, and other species.

(H) Use of herbicides, so long as the Secretary concerned determines that the activity is otherwise conducted consistently with agency procedures, including any forest plan applicable to the area covered by the activity.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) ACREAGE LIMITATIONS.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not exceed 10,000 acres.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HAZARDOUS FUELS MANAGEMENT.—The term ''hazardous fuels management'' means any vegetation management activities that reduce the risk of wildfire.

(2) LATE-SEASON GRAZING.—The term ''late-season grazing'' means grazing activities that occur after both the invasive species and native perennial species have completed their current-year annual growth cycle until new plant growth begins to appear in the following year.

(3) TARGETED LIVESTOCK GRAZING.—The term ''targeted livestock grazing'' means grazing used for purposes of hazardous fuel reduction.

Subtitle C—General Provisions for Forest Management Activities

SEC. 121. COMPLIANCE WITH FOREST PLANS.

A forest management activity carried out pursuant to this Act shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the forest plan applicable to the National Forest System land or public lands covered by the forest management activity.

SEC. 122. CONSULTATION UNDER THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall each develop, in consultation with relevant consulting parties, a programmatic agreement or other appropriate program alternative pursuant to section 800.14 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulation, for expediting reviews under section 306108 of title 54, United States Code, for forest management activities carried out pursuant to this Act.

(b) REQUIREMENT.—A programmatic agreement or other program alternative developed under subsection (a) shall incorporate the concepts of phased identification and evaluation set forth in section 800.4(b)(2) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulation.

SEC. 123. CONSULTATION UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT.

(a) NO CONSULTATION IF ACTION NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT A LISTED SPECIES OR DESIGNATED CRITICAL HABITAT.—With respect to a forest management activity carried out pursuant to this Act, consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) shall not be required if the Secretary concerned determines that the such forest management activity is not likely to adversely affect a listed species or designated critical habitat.

(b) EXPEDITED CONSULTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a forest management activity carried out pursuant to this Act, consultation required under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) shall be concluded within the 90-day period beginning on the date on which such consultation was requested by the Secretary concerned.

(2) NO CONCLUSION.—In the case of a consultation described in paragraph (1) that is not concluded within the 90-day period, the forest management activity for which such consultation was initiated—

(A) shall be considered to have not violated section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)); and

(B) may be carried out.

SEC. 124. FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES CONSIDERED NON-DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS.

For purposes of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), a forest management activity carried out by the Secretary concerned pursuant to this Act shall be considered a non-discretionary action.

TITLE II—SALVAGE AND REFORESTATION IN RESPONSE TO CATASTROPHIC EVENTS

SEC. 201. EXPEDITED SALVAGE OPERATIONS AND REFORESTATION ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING LARGE-SCALE CATASTROPHIC EVENTS.

(a) EXPEDITED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an environmental assessment prepared by the Secretary concerned pursuant to section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332) for a salvage operation or reforestation activity proposed to be conducted on National Forest System lands or public lands adversely impacted by a large-scale catastrophic event shall be completed within 60 days after the conclusion of the catastrophic event.

(b) EXPEDITED IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLETION.—In the case of reforestation activities conducted on National Forest System lands or public lands adversely impacted by a large-scale catastrophic event, the Secretary concerned shall, to the maximum extent practicable, achieve reforestation of at least 75 percent of the impacted lands during the 5-year period following the conclusion of the catastrophic event.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF KNUTSON-VANDENBERG FUNDS.—Amounts in the special fund established pursuant to section 3 of the Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the Knutson-Vandenberg Act; 16 U.S.C. 576b) shall be available to the Secretary of Agriculture for reforestation activities authorized by this title.

(d) TIMELINE FOR PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the case of a salvage operation or reforestation activity proposed to be conducted on National Forest System lands or public lands adversely impacted by a large-scale catastrophic event, the Secretary concerned shall allow 30 days for public scoping and comment, 15 days for filing an objection, and 15 days for the agency response to the filing of an objection. Upon completion of this process and expiration of the period specified in subsection (a), the Secretary concerned shall implement the project immediately.

SEC. 202. COMPLIANCE WITH FOREST PLAN.

A salvage operation or reforestation activity authorized by this title shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the forest plan applicable to the National Forest System lands or public lands covered by the salvage operation or reforestation activity.

SEC. 203. PROHIBITION ON RESTRAINING ORDERS, PRELIMINARY INJUNCTIONS, AND INJUNCTIONS PENDING APPEAL.

No restraining order, preliminary injunction, or injunction pending appeal shall be issued by any court of the United States with respect to any decision to prepare or conduct a salvage operation or reforestation activity in response to a large-scale catastrophic event. Section 705 of title 5, United States Code, shall not apply to any challenge to the salvage operation or reforestation activity.

TITLE III—FOREST MANAGEMENT LITIGATION

Subtitle A—General Litigation Provisions

SEC. 301. NO ATTORNEY FEES FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY CHALLENGES.

Notwithstanding section 1304 of title 31, United States Code, no award may be made under section 2412 of title 28, United States Code, and no amounts may be obligated or expended from the Claims and Judgment Fund of the United States Treasury to pay any fees or other expenses under such sections to any plaintiff related to an action challenging a forest management activity carried out pursuant to this Act.

SEC. 302. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.

(a) BALANCING SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN CONSIDERING INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—As part of its weighing the equities while considering any request for an injunction that applies to any agency action as part of a forest management activity under titles I through IX, the court reviewing the agency action shall balance the impact to the ecosystem likely affected by the forest management activity of—

(1) the short- and long-term effects of undertaking the agency action; against

(2) the short- and long-term effects of not undertaking the action.

(b) TIME LIMITATIONS FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2) the length of any preliminary injunctive relief and stays pending appeal that applies to any agency action as part of a forest management activity under titles I through IX, shall not exceed 60 days.

(2) RENEWAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A court of competent jurisdiction may issue one or more renewals of any preliminary injunction, or stay pending appeal, granted under paragraph (1).

(B) UPDATES.—In each renewal of an injunction in an action, the parties to the action shall present the court with updated information on the status of the authorized forest management activity.

Subtitle B—Forest Management Activity Arbitration Pilot Program

SEC. 311. USE OF ARBITRATION INSTEAD OF LITIGATION TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES TO FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) DISCRETIONARY ARBITRATION PROCESS PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands, and the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands, shall each establish a discretionary arbitration pilot program as an alternative dispute resolution process in lieu of judicial review for the activities described in paragraph (2).

(2) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—The Secretary concerned, at the sole discretion of the Secretary, may designate objections or protests to forest management activities for arbitration under the arbitration pilot program established under paragraph (1).

(3) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ARBITRATIONS.—Under the arbitration pilot program, the Secretary concerned may not arbitrate more than 10 objections or protests to forest management activities in a fiscal year in—

(A) each Forest Service Region; and

(B) each State Region of the Bureau of Land Management.

(4) DETERMINING AMOUNT OF ARBITRATIONS.—An objection or protest to a forest management activity shall not be counted towards the limitation on number of arbitrations under paragraph (3) unless—

(A) on the date such objection or protest is designated for arbitration, the forest management activity for which such objection or protest is filed has not been the subject of arbitration proceedings under the pilot program; and

(B) the arbitration proceeding has commenced with respect to such objection or protest.

(5) TERMINATION.—The pilot programs established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) INTERVENING PARTIES.—

(1) REQUIREMENTS.—Any person that submitted a public comment on the forest management activity that is subject to arbitration may intervene in the arbitration—

(A) by endorsing—

(i) the forest management activity; or

(ii) the modification proposal submitted under subparagraph (B); or

(B) by submitting a proposal to further modify the forest management activity.

(2) DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION.—With respect to an objection or protest that is designated for arbitration under this subsection (a), a request to intervene in an arbitration must be submitted not later than the date that is 30 days after the date on which such objection or protest was designated for arbitration.

(3) MULTIPLE PARTIES.—Multiple intervening parties may submit a joint proposal so long as each intervening party meets the eligibility requirements of paragraph (1).

(c) APPOINTMENT OF ARBITRATOR.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior shall jointly develop and publish a list of not fewer than 20 individuals eligible to serve as arbitrators for the pilot programs under this section.

(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—In order to be eligible to serve as an arbitrator under this subsection, an individual shall be, on the date of the appointment of such arbitrator—

(A) certified by the American Arbitration Association; and

(B) not a registered lobbyist.

(3) SELECTION OF ARBITRATOR.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For each arbitration commenced under this section, the Secretary concerned and each applicable objector or protestor shall agree, not later than 14 days after the agreement process is initiated, on a mutually acceptable arbitrator from the list published under subsection.

(B) APPOINTMENT AFTER 14-DAYS.—In the case of an agreement with respect to a mutually acceptable arbitrator not being reached within the 14-day limit described in subparagraph (A), the Secretary concerned shall appoint an arbitrator from the list published under this subsection.

(d) SELECTION OF PROPOSALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The arbitrator appointed under subsection (c)—

(A) may not modify any of the proposals submitted with the objection, protest, or request to intervene; and

(B) shall select to be conducted—

(i) the forest management activity, as approved by the Secretary; or

(ii) a proposal submitted by an objector or an intervening party.

(2) SELECTION CRITERIA.—An arbitrator shall, when selecting a proposal, consider—

(A) whether the proposal is consistent with the applicable forest plan, laws, and regulations;

(B) whether the proposal can be carried out by the Secretary concerned; and

(C) the effect of each proposal on—

(i) forest health;

(ii) habitat diversity;

(iii) wildfire potential;

(iv) insect and disease potential;

(v) timber production; and

(vi) the implications of a resulting decline in forest health, loss of habitat diversity, wildfire, or insect or disease infestation, given fire and insect and disease historic cycles, on—

(I) domestic water costs;

(II) wildlife habitat loss; and

(III) other economic and social factors.

(e) EFFECT OF DECISION.—The decision of an arbitrator with respect to the forest management activity—

(1) shall not be considered a major Federal action;

(2) shall be binding; and

(3) shall not be subject to judicial review, except as provided in section 10(a) of title 9, United States Code.

(f) DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the arbitration is filed with respect to the forest management activity, the arbitration process shall be completed.

TITLE IV—SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT AMENDMENTS

SEC. 401. USE OF RESERVED FUNDS FOR TITLE II PROJECTS ON FEDERAL LAND AND CERTAIN NON-FEDERAL LAND.

(a) REPEAL OF MERCHANTABLE TIMBER CONTRACTING PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 204(e) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7124(e)) is amended by striking paragraph (3).

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT FUNDS.—Section 204(f) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7124(f)) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT FUNDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary concerned shall ensure that at least 50 percent of the project funds reserved by a participating county under section 102(d) shall be available only for projects that—

''(A) include the sale of timber or other forest products, reduce fire risks, or improve water supplies; and

''(B) implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems or restore and improve land health and water quality.

''(2) APPLICABILITY.—The requirement in paragraph (1) shall apply only to project funds reserved by a participating county whose boundaries include Federal land that the Secretary concerned determines has been subject to a timber or other forest products program within 5 fiscal years before the fiscal year in which the funds are reserved.''.

SEC. 402. RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(a) RECOGNITION OF RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—Section 205(a)(4) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(a)(4)) is amended by striking ''2012'' each place it appears and inserting ''2022''.

(b) REDUCTION IN COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES.—Section 205(d) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''15 members'' and inserting ''9 members''; and

(2) by striking ''5 persons'' each place it appears and inserting ''3 persons''.

(c) EXPANDING LOCAL PARTICIPATION ON COMMITTEES.—Section 205(d) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', consistent with the requirements of paragraph (4)''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(4) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—The members of a resource advisory committee shall reside within the county or counties in which the committee has jurisdiction or an adjacent county.''.

(d) APPOINTMENT OF RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES BY APPLICABLE DESIGNEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125) is further amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned'';

(ii) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned''; and

(iii) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned'' both places it appears;

(B) in subsection (b)(6), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned'';

(C) in subsection (c)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by inserting ''OR APPLICABLE DESIGNEE'' after ''BY THE SECRETARY'';

(ii) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned'' both places it appears;

(iii) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned'';

(iv) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned''; and

(v) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) APPLICABLE DESIGNEE.—In this section, the term 'applicable designee' means—

''(A) with respect to Federal land described in section 3(7)(A), the applicable Regional Forester; and

''(B) with respect to Federal land described in section 3(7)(B), the applicable Bureau of Land Management State Director.'';

(D) in subsection (d)(3), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned''; and

(E) in subsection (f)(1)—

(i) by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned''; and

(ii) by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''of the Secretary''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 201(3) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7121(3)) is amended by inserting ''(or applicable designee (as defined in section 205(c)(6)))'' after ''Secretary concerned'' both places it appears.

SEC. 403. PROGRAM FOR TITLE II SELF-SUSTAINING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECTS.

(a) SELF-SUSTAINING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECTS.—Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7121 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 209. PROGRAM FOR SELF-SUSTAINING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECTS.

''(a) RAC PROGRAM.—The Chief of the Forest Service shall conduct a program (to be known as the 'self-sustaining resource advisory committee program' or 'RAC program') under which 10 resource advisory committees will propose projects authorized by subsection (c) to be carried out using project funds reserved by a participating county under section 102(d).

''(b) SELECTION OF PARTICIPATING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—The selection of resource advisory committees to participate in the RAC program is in the sole discretion of the Chief of the Forest Service.

''(c) AUTHORIZED PROJECTS.—Notwithstanding the project purposes specified in sections 202(b), 203(c), and 204(a)(5), projects under the RAC program are intended to—

''(1) accomplish forest management objectives or support community development; and

''(2) generate receipts.

''(d) DEPOSIT AND AVAILABILITY OF REVENUES.—Any revenue generated by a project conducted under the RAC program, including any interest accrued from the revenues, shall be—

''(1) deposited in the special account in the Treasury established under section 102(d)(2)(A); and

''(2) available, in such amounts as may be provided in advance in appropriation Acts, for additional projects under the RAC program.

''(e) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The authority to initiate a project under the RAC program shall terminate on September 30, 2022.

''(2) DEPOSITS IN TREASURY.—Any funds available for projects under the RAC program and not obligated by September 30, 2023, shall be deposited in the Treasury of the United States.''.

(b) EXCEPTION TO GENERAL RULE REGARDING TREATMENT OF RECEIPTS.—Section 403(b) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7153(b)) is amended by striking ''All revenues'' and inserting ''Except as provided in section 209, all revenues''.

SEC. 404. ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZED USE OF RESERVED FUNDS FOR TITLE III COUNTY PROJECTS.

Section 302(a) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7142(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting ''and law enforcement patrols'' after ''including firefighting''; and

(B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''and carry out'' after ''develop'';

(3) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(4) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph (3):

''(3) to cover training costs and equipment purchases directly related to the emergency services described in paragraph (2); and''.

SEC. 405. TREATMENT AS SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 102 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7112) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) TREATMENT AS SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING.—None of the funds made available to a beneficiary county or other political subdivision of a State under this Act shall be used in lieu of or to otherwise offset State funding sources for local schools, facilities, or educational purposes.''.

(b) CONTINUATION OF DIRECT PAYMENTS.—Payments to States made under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) and 25-percent payments made to States and Territories under the Acts of May 23, 1908, and March 1, 1911 (16 U.S.C. 500), shall continue to be made as direct payments.

TITLE V—STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING

SEC. 501. CANCELLATION CEILINGS FOR STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING PROJECTS.

(a) CANCELLATION CEILINGS.—Section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (h) and (i) as subsections (i) and (j), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (g) the following new subsection (h):

''(h) CANCELLATION CEILINGS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 3903(b)(1) of title 41, United States Code, the Chief and the Director may obligate funds in stages that are economically or programmatically viable to cover any potential cancellation or termination costs for an agreement or contract under subsection (b) in stages that are economically or programmatically viable.

''(2) ADVANCE NOTICE TO CONGRESS OF CANCELLATION CEILING IN EXCESS OF $25 MILLION.—Not later than 30 days before entering into a multiyear agreement or contract under subsection (b) that includes a cancellation ceiling in excess of $25 million, but does not include proposed funding for the costs of cancelling the agreement or contract up to such cancellation ceiling, the Chief or the Director, as the case may be, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a written notice that includes—

''(A) the cancellation ceiling amounts proposed for each program year in the agreement or contract;

''(B) the reasons why such cancellation ceiling amounts were selected;

''(C) the extent to which the costs of contract cancellation are not included in the budget for the agreement or contract; and

''(D) an assessment of the financial risk of not including budgeting for the costs of agreement or contract cancellation.

''(3) TRANSMITTAL OF NOTICE TO OMB.—Not later than 14 days after the date on which written notice is provided under paragraph (2) with respect to an agreement or contract under subsection (b), the Chief or the Director, as the case may be, shall transmit a copy of the notice to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.''.

(b) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—Section 604(d)(5) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(d)(5)) is amended—

(1) by striking '', the Chief may'' and inserting ''and section 2(a)(1) of the Act of July 31, 1947 (commonly known as the Materials Act of 1947; 30 U.S.C. 602(a)(1)), the Chief and the Director may''; and

(2) by striking the last sentence.

SEC. 502. EXCESS OFFSET VALUE.

Section 604(g)(2) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(g)(2)) is amended by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

''(A) use the excess to satisfy any outstanding liabilities for cancelled agreements or contracts; or

''(B) if there are no outstanding liabilities under subparagraph (A), apply the excess to other authorized stewardship projects.''.

SEC. 503. PAYMENT OF PORTION OF STEWARDSHIP PROJECT REVENUES TO COUNTY IN WHICH STEWARDSHIP PROJECT OCCURS.

Section 604(e) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting ''subject to paragraph (3)(A),'' before ''shall''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking ''services received by the Chief or the Director'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting the following: ''services and in-kind resources received by the Chief or the Director under a stewardship contract project conducted under this section shall not be considered monies received from the National Forest System or the public lands, but any payments made by the contractor to the Chief or Director under the project shall be considered monies received from the National Forest System or the public lands.''.

SEC. 504. SUBMISSION OF EXISTING ANNUAL REPORT.

Subsection (j) of section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c), as redesignated by section 501(a)(1), is amended by striking ''report to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''submit to the congressional committees specified in subsection (h)(2) a report''.

SEC. 505. FIRE LIABILITY PROVISION.

Section 604(d) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(8) MODIFICATION.—Upon the request of the contractor, a contract or agreement under this section awarded before February 7, 2014, shall be modified by the Chief or Director to include the fire liability provisions described in paragraph (7).''.

SEC. 506. EXTENSION OF STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING MAXIMUM TERM LIMITS.

(a) HEALTH FORESTS RESTORATION ACT.—Section 604(d)(3)(B) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(d)(3)(B)) is amended by striking ''10 years'' and inserting ''20 years''.

(b) NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT.—Section 14(c) of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(c)) is amended by striking ''ten years'' and inserting ''20 years''.

TITLE VI—ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

SEC. 601. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ''eligible entity'' means—

(A) a State or political subdivision of a State containing National Forest System lands or public lands;

(B) a publicly chartered utility serving one or more States or a political subdivision thereof;

(C) a rural electric company; and

(D) any other entity determined by the Secretary concerned to be appropriate for participation in the Fund.

(2) FUND.—The term ''Fund'' means the State-Supported Forest Management Fund established by section 603.

SEC. 602. AVAILABILITY OF STEWARDSHIP PROJECT REVENUES AND COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION FUND TO COVER FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY PLANNING COSTS.

(a) AVAILABILITY OF STEWARDSHIP PROJECT REVENUES.—Section 604(e)(2)(B) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(e)(2)(B)), as amended by section 503, is further amended by striking ''appropriation at the project site from which the monies are collected or at another project site.'' and inserting the following: ''appropriation—

''(i) at the project site from which the monies are collected or at another project site; and

''(ii) to cover not more than 25 percent of the cost of planning additional stewardship contracting projects.''.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION FUND.—Section 4003(f)(1) of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303(f)(1)) is amended by striking ''carrying out and'' and inserting ''planning, carrying out, and''.

SEC. 603. STATE-SUPPORTED PLANNING OF FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) STATE-SUPPORTED FOREST MANAGEMENT FUND.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a fund, to be known as the ''State-Supported Forest Management Fund'', to cover the cost of planning (especially related to compliance with section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332)), carrying out, and monitoring certain forest management activities on National Forest System lands or public lands.

(b) CONTENTS.—The State-Supported Forest Management Fund shall consist of such amounts as may be—

(1) contributed by an eligible entity for deposit in the Fund;

(2) appropriated to the Fund; or

(3) generated by forest management activities carried out using amounts in the Fund.

(c) GEOGRAPHICAL AND USE LIMITATIONS.—In making a contribution under subsection (b)(1), an eligible entity may—

(1) specify the National Forest System lands or public lands for which the contribution may be expended; and

(2) limit the types of forest management activities for which the contribution may be expended.

(d) AUTHORIZED FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.—In such amounts as may be provided in advance in appropriation Acts, the Secretary concerned may use the Fund to plan, carry out, and monitor a forest management activity that—

(1) is developed through a collaborative process;

(2) is proposed by a resource advisory committee;

(3) is covered by a community wildfire protection plan.

(e) IMPLEMENTATION METHODS.—A forest management activity carried out using amounts in the Fund may be carried out using a contract or agreement under section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c), the good neighbor authority provided by section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a), a contract under section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a), or other authority available to the Secretary concerned, but revenues generated by the forest management activity shall be used to reimburse the Fund for planning costs covered using amounts in the Fund.

(f) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—

(1) REVENUE SHARING.—Subject to subsection (e), revenues generated by a forest management activity carried out using amounts from the Fund shall be considered monies received from the National Forest System.

(2) KNUTSON-VANDERBERG ACT.—The Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the Knutson-Vanderberg Act; 16 U.S.C. 576 et seq.), shall apply to any forest management activity carried out using amounts in the Fund.

(g) TERMINATION OF FUND.—

(1) TERMINATION.—The Fund shall terminate 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) EFFECT OF TERMINATION.—Upon the termination of the Fund pursuant to paragraph (1) or pursuant to any other provision of law, unobligated contributions remaining in the Fund shall be returned to the eligible entity that made the contribution.

TITLE VII—TRIBAL FORESTRY PARTICIPATION AND PROTECTION

SEC. 701. PROTECTION OF TRIBAL FOREST ASSETS THROUGH USE OF STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.

(a) PROMPT CONSIDERATION OF TRIBAL REQUESTS.—Section 2(b) of the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''Not later than 120 days after the date on which an Indian tribe submits to the Secretary'' and inserting ''In response to the submission by an Indian Tribe of''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) TIME PERIODS FOR CONSIDERATION.—

''(A) INITIAL RESPONSE.—Not later than 120 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a Tribal request under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide an initial response to the Indian Tribe regarding—

''(i) whether the request may meet the selection criteria described in subsection (c); and

''(ii) the likelihood of the Secretary entering into an agreement or contract with the Indian Tribe under paragraph (2) for activities described in paragraph (3).

''(B) NOTICE OF DENIAL.—Notice under subsection (d) of the denial of a Tribal request under paragraph (1) shall be provided not later than 1 year after the date on which the Secretary received the request.

''(C) COMPLETION.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the Secretary receives a Tribal request under paragraph (1), other than a Tribal request denied under subsection (d), the Secretary shall—

''(i) complete all environmental reviews necessary in connection with the agreement or contract and proposed activities under the agreement or contract; and

''(ii) enter into the agreement or contract with the Indian tribe under paragraph (2).''.

(b) CONFORMING AND TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 2 of the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a) is amended—

(1) in subsections (b)(1) and (f)(1), by striking ''section 347 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (16 U.S.C. 2104 note; Public Law 105–277) (as amended by section 323 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2003 (117 Stat. 275))'' and inserting ''section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c)''; and

(2) in subsection (d), by striking ''subsection (b)(1), the Secretary may'' and inserting ''paragraphs (1) and (4)(B) of subsection (b), the Secretary shall''.

SEC. 702. MANAGEMENT OF INDIAN FOREST LAND AUTHORIZED TO INCLUDE RELATED NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS AND PUBLIC LANDS.

Section 305 of the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3104) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LAND AND PUBLIC LAND.—

''(1) AUTHORITY.—At the request of an Indian Tribe, the Secretary concerned may agree to treat Federal forest land as Indian forest land for purposes of planning and conducting forest land management activities under this section if the Federal forest land is located within, or mostly within, a geographic area that presents a feature or involves circumstances principally relevant to that Indian Tribe, such as Federal forest land ceded to the United States by treaty, Federal forest land within the boundaries of a current or former reservation, or Federal forest land adjudicated to be Tribal homelands.

''(2) REQUIREMENTS.—As part of the agreement to treat Federal forest land as Indian forest land under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned and the Indian Tribe making the request shall—

''(A) provide for continued public access applicable to the Federal forest land prior to the agreement, except that the Secretary concerned may limit or prohibit such access as needed;

''(B) continue sharing revenue generated by the Federal forest land with State and local governments either—

''(i) on the terms applicable to the Federal forest land prior to the agreement, including, where applicable, 25-percent payments or 50-percent payments; or

''(ii) at the option of the Indian Tribe, on terms agreed upon by the Indian Tribe, the Secretary concerned, and State and county governments participating in a revenue sharing agreement for the Federal forest land;

''(C) comply with applicable prohibitions on the export of unprocessed logs harvested from the Federal forest land;

''(D) recognize all right-of-way agreements in place on Federal forest land prior to commencement of Tribal management activities;

''(E) ensure that all commercial timber removed from the Federal forest land is sold on a competitive bid basis; and

''(F) cooperate with the appropriate State fish and wildlife agency to achieve mutual agreement on the management of fish and wildlife.

''(3) LIMITATION.—Treating Federal forest land as Indian forest land for purposes of planning and conducting management activities pursuant to paragraph (1) shall not be construed to designate the Federal forest land as Indian forest lands for any other purpose.

''(4) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) FEDERAL FOREST LAND.—The term 'Federal forest land' means—

''(i) National Forest System lands; and

''(ii) public lands (as defined in section 103(e) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702(e))), including Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands reconveyed to the United States pursuant to the first section of the Act of February 26, 1919 (40 Stat. 1179), and Oregon and California Railroad Grant lands.

''(B) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term 'Secretary concerned' means—

''(i) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to the Federal forest land referred to in subparagraph (A)(i); and

''(ii) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to the Federal forest land referred to in subparagraph (A)(ii).''.

SEC. 703. TRIBAL FOREST MANAGEMENT DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may carry out demonstration projects by which federally recognized Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations may contract to perform administrative, management, and other functions of programs of the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a et seq.) through contracts entered into under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304 et seq.).

SEC. 704. RULE OF APPLICATION.

Nothing in this title, or the amendments made by this title, shall be construed as interfering with, diminishing, or conflicting with the authority, jurisdiction, or responsibility of any State to exercise primary management, control, or regulation of fish and wildlife on land or water within the State (including on public land) under State law.

TITLE VIII— EXPEDITING INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION

Subtitle A—Forest Plans Not Considered Major Federal Actions

SEC. 801. FOREST PLANS NOT CONSIDERED MAJOR FEDERAL ACTIONS.

The development, maintenance, amendment, and revision of a forest plan shall not be considered a major Federal action for purposes of section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

Subtitle B—Agency Consultation

SEC. 811. CONSULTATION UNDER FOREST AND RANGELAND RENEWABLE RESOURCES PLANNING ACT OF 1974.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6(d) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(d) The Secretary'' and inserting the following:

''(d) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED AFTER APPROVAL OF LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to engage in consultation under this subsection or any other provision of law (including section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1536) and section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation)) with respect to—

''(i) if a land management plan approved by the Secretary—

''(I) the listing of a species as threatened or endangered, or a designation of critical habitat pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

''(II) whether the amount or extent of taking specified in the incidental take statement is exceeded;

''(III) whether new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered; or

''(IV) whether the identified action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the listed species or critical habitat that was not considered in the biological opinion; or

''(ii) any provision of a land management plan adopted as described in clause (i).

''(B) EFFECT OF PARAGRAPH.—Nothing in this paragraph affects any applicable requirement of the Secretary to consult with the head of any other Federal department or agency—

''(i) regarding any project, including a project carried out, or proposed to be carried out, in an area designated as critical habitat pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

''(ii) with respect to the development of an amendment to a land management plan that would result in a significant change in the land management plan.

''(3) LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSIDERED A NON-DISCRETIONARY ACTION.—For purposes of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), a forest management activity carried out by the Secretary concerned pursuant to this Act shall be considered a non-discretionary action.''.

(b) DEFINITION OF SECRETARY; CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) DEFINITION OF SECRETARY.—Section 3(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601(a)) is amended, in the first sentence of the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''(referred to in this Act as the 'Secretary')'' after ''Secretary of Agriculture''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1600 et seq.) is amended, in sections 4 through 9, 12, 13, and 15, by striking ''Secretary of Agriculture'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary''.

SEC. 812. CONSULTATION UNDER FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976.

Section 202(f) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712(f)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(f) The Secretary'' and inserting the following:

''(f) PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED AFTER APPROVAL OF LAND USE PLANS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to engage in consultation under this subsection or any other provision of law (including section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1536) and section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation)), with respect to—

''(i) the listing of a species as threatened or endangered, or a designation of critical habitat, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), if a land use plan has been adopted by the Secretary as of the date of listing or designation; or

''(ii) any provision of a land use plan adopted as described in clause (i).

''(B) EFFECT OF PARAGRAPH.—

''(i) DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE.—In this subparagraph, the term 'significant change' means a significant change within the meaning of section 219.13(b)(3) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this subparagraph), except that—

''(I) any reference contained in that section to a land management plan shall be deemed to be a reference to a land use plan;

''(II) any reference contained in that section to the Forest Service shall be deemed to be a reference to the Bureau of Land Management; and

''(III) any reference contained in that section to the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94–588; 90 Stat. 2949) shall be deemed to be a reference to this Act.

''(ii) EFFECT.—Nothing in this paragraph affects any applicable requirement of the Secretary to consult with the head of any other Federal department or agency—

''(I) regarding a project carried out, or proposed to be carried out, with respect to a species listed as threatened or endangered, or in an area designated as critical habitat, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

''(II) with respect to the development of a new land use plan or the revision of or other significant change to an existing land use plan.

''(3) LAND USE PLAN CONSIDERED NON-DISCRETIONARY ACTION.—For purposes of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), a forest management activity carried out by the Secretary concerned pursuant to this Act shall be considered a non-discretionary action.''.

TITLE IX—MISCELLANEOUS

Subtitle A—Forest Management Provisions

SEC. 901. CLARIFICATION OF EXISTING CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION AUTHORITY RELATED TO INSECT AND DISEASE INFESTATION.

Section 603(c)(2)(B) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(c)(2)(B)) is amended by striking ''Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III'' and inserting ''Fire Regime I, Fire Regime II, Fire Regime III, Fire Regime IV, or Fire Regime V''.

SEC. 902. REVISION OF ALTERNATE CONSULTATION AGREEMENT REGULATIONS.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce shall revise section 402.13 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, to—

(1) authorize Federal agencies to enter into alternative consultation agreements under which the Federal agency may determine if an action such agency authorizes is likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat; and

(2) if an agency determines such action will not likely adversely affect listed species or critical habitat pursuant to paragraph (1), not require such agency to complete a formal consultation, informal consultation, or written concurrence of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service with respect to such action.

SEC. 903. REVISION OF EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS.

(a) DETERMINATIONS OF EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.—In determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to a proposed action preclude use of a categorical exclusion, the Forest Service shall not be required to—

(1) consider whether a proposed action is within a potential wilderness area;

(2) consider whether a proposed action affects a Forest Service sensitive species;

(3) conduct an analysis under section 220.4(f) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, of the proposed action's cumulative impact (as the term is defined in section 1508.7 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations);

(4) consider a determination under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) that a proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, threatened, endangered, or candidate species, or designated critical habitats; or

(5) consider a determination under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) that a proposed action may affect, and is likely to adversely affect threatened, endangered, candidate species, or designated critical habitat if the agency is in compliance with the applicable provisions of the biological opinion.

(b) PROPOSED RULEMAKING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall publish a notice of proposed rulemaking to revise section 220.6(b) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations to conform such section with subsection (a).

(c) ADDITIONAL REVISION.—As part of the proposed rulemaking described in subsection (b), the Secretary of Agriculture shall revise section 220.5(a)(2) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide that the Forest Service shall not be required to consider proposals that would substantially alter a potential wilderness area as a class of actions normally requiring environmental impact statements.

(d) ADDITIONAL ACTIONS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue final regulations to carry out the revisions described in subsections (b) and (c).

SEC. 904. CONDITIONS ON FOREST SERVICE ROAD DECOMMISSIONING.

(a) CONSULTATION WITH AFFECTED COUNTY.—Whenever any Forest Service defined maintenance level one- or two-system road within a designated high-fire prone area of a unit of the National Forest System is considered for decommissioning, the Forest Supervisor of that unit of the National Forest System shall—

(1) consult with the government of the county containing the road regarding the merits and possible consequences of decommissioning the road; and

(2) solicit possible alternatives to decommissioning the road.

(b) PERIOD PRIOR TO DECOMMISSION.—A Forest Service road described in subsection (a) may not be decommissioned without the advance approval of the Regional Forester.

SEC. 905. PROHIBITION ON APPLICATION OF EASTSIDE SCREENS REQUIREMENTS ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS.

(a) REPEAL OF EASTSIDE SCREENS REQUIREMENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Agriculture shall immediately withdraw the Interim Management Direction Establishing Riparian, Ecosystem, and Wildlife Standards for Timber Sales (commonly known as the Eastside Screens requirements), including all preceding or associated versions of these amendments.

(b) EFFECT OF REPEAL.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture may not apply to National Forest System lands any of the amendments repealed under subsection (a).

SEC. 906. USE OF SITE-SPECIFIC FOREST PLAN AMENDMENTS FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES.

If the Secretary concerned determines that, in order to conduct a project or carry out an activity implementing a forest plan, an amendment to the forest plan is required, the Secretary concerned shall execute such amendment as a non-significant plan amendment through the record of decision or decision notice for the project or activity.

SEC. 907. KNUTSON-VANDENBERG ACT MODIFICATIONS.

(a) DEPOSITS OF FUNDS FROM NATIONAL FOREST TIMBER PURCHASERS REQUIRED.—Section 3(a) of the Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the Knutson-Vandenberg Act; 16 U.S.C. 576b(a)), is amended by striking ''The Secretary'' and all that follows through ''any purchaser'' and inserting the following: ''The Secretary of Agriculture shall require each purchaser''.

(b) CONDITIONS ON USE OF DEPOSITS.—Section 3 of the Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the Knutson-Vandenberg Act; 16 U.S.C. 576b), is amended—

(1) by striking ''Such deposits'' and inserting the following:

''(b) Amounts deposited under subsection (a)'';

(2) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d); and

(3) by inserting before subsection (d), as so redesignated, the following new subsection (c):

''(c)(1) Amounts in the special fund established pursuant to this section—

''(A) shall be used exclusively to implement activities authorized by subsection (a); and

''(B) may be used anywhere within the Forest Service Region from which the original deposits were collected.

''(2) The Secretary of Agriculture may not deduct overhead costs from the funds collected under subsection (a), except as needed to fund personnel of the responsible Ranger District for the planning and implementation of the activities authorized by subsection (a).''.

SEC. 908. APPLICATION OF NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN SURVEY AND MANAGE MITIGATION MEASURE STANDARD AND GUIDELINES.

The Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standard and Guidelines shall not apply to any National Forest System lands or public lands.

SEC. 909. RECONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR INCLUDED IN GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENTS.

Section 8206(a)(3) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in clause (ii), by striking ''and'';

(B) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv); and

(C) by inserting after clause (ii) the following new clause:

''(iii) construction, reconstruction, repair or restoration of roads as necessary to achieve project objectives; and''; and

(2) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

''(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term 'forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration services' does not include construction, alteration, repair or replacement of public buildings or works.''.

SEC. 910. LOGGING AND MECHANIZED OPERATIONS.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 3 (29 U.S.C. 203)—

(A) in subsection (l), by striking ''well-being.'' and inserting ''well-being, and that employment of employees ages sixteen or seventeen years in a logging or mechanized operation in an occupation that the Secretary of Labor finds and declares to be particularly hazardous for the employment of individuals of such ages shall not be deemed to constitute oppressive child labor if such employee is employed by his parent or by a person standing in the place of his parent in a logging or mechanized operation owned or operated by such parent or person.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(z)(1) 'Logging'—

''(A) means—

''(i) the felling, skidding, yarding, loading and processing of timber by equipment other than manually operated chainsaws and cable skidders;

''(ii) the felling of timber in mechanized operations;

''(iii) the bucking or converting of timber into logs, poles, ties, bolts, pulpwood, chemical wood, excelsior wood, cordwood, fence posts, or similar products;

''(iv) the collecting, skidding, yarding, loading, transporting and unloading of such products in connection with logging;

''(v) the constructing, repairing and maintaining of roads or camps used in connection with logging; the constructing, repairing, and maintenance of machinery or equipment used in logging; and

''(vi) other work performed in connection with logging; and

''(B) does not include the manual use of chain saws to fell and process timber and the use of cable skidders to bring the timber to the landing.

''(2) 'Mechanized operation'—

''(A) means the felling, skidding, yarding, loading and processing of timber by equipment other than manually operated chainsaws and cable skidders; and

''(B) includes whole tree processors, cut-to-length processors, stroke boom delimbers, wheeled and track feller-bunchers, pull thru delimbers, wheeled and track forwarders, chippers, grinders, mechanical debarkers, wheeled and track grapple skidders, yarders, bulldozers, excavators, and log loaders.''; and

(2) in section 13(c) (29 U.S.C. 211(c)), by adding at the end the following:

''(8) The provisions of section 12 relating to child labor shall apply to an employee who is 16 or 17 years old employed in a logging or mechanized operation in an occupation that the Secretary of Labor finds and declares to be particularly hazardous for the employment of children ages 16 or 17, except where such employee is employed by his parent or by a person standing in the place of his parent in a logging or mechanized operation owned or operated by such parent or person.''.

Subtitle B—Oregon and California Railroad Grant Lands and Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant Lands

SEC. 911. AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT OF AUGUST 28, 1937.

The first section of the Act of August 28, 1937 (50 Stat. 874; 43 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.), is amended—

(1) by striking ''principal of sustained yield'' and inserting ''principle of sustained yield'';

(2) by striking ''facilties'' and inserting ''facilities''; and

(3) by striking ''That timber from said lands in an amount'' and inserting ''That timber from said lands in the amount that is the greater of:''.

SEC. 912. OREGON AND CALIFORNIA RAILROAD GRANT LANDS AND COOS BAY WAGON ROAD GRANT LANDS PERMANENT RIGHTS OF ACCESS.

(a) CREATION OF PERMANENT RIGHTS OF ACCESS REQUIRED.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on the date of the enactment of this section, reciprocal road right-of-way permits, grants, and agreements issued to a private landowner by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to subpart 2812 of part 2810 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations, or its predecessor regulation shall become permanent rights of access that are recordable and that shall run with the land.

(b) RECORDS UPDATED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the reciprocal road right-of-way permits, grants, and agreements described in subsection (a) shall be amended to reflect the permanent rights of access required under subsection (a) and recorded by the Secretary of the Interior in each county where the lands are located. No other amendments shall be made to such right-of-way permits, grants, and agreements.

SEC. 913. MANAGEMENT OF BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT LANDS IN WESTERN OREGON.

(a) IN GENERAL.—All of the public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the Northwest District, Roseburg District, Coos Bay District, Medford District, and the Klamath Resource Area of the Lakeview District in the State of Oregon shall hereafter be managed pursuant to title I of the of the Act of August 28, 1937 (43 U.S.C. 1181a through 1181e). Except as provided in subsection (b), all of the revenue produced from such land shall be deposited in the Treasury of the United States in the Oregon and California land-grant fund and be subject to the provisions of title II of the Act of August 28, 1937 (43 U.S.C. 1181f).

(b) CERTAIN LANDS EXCLUDED.—Subsection (a) does not apply to any revenue that is required to be deposited in the Coos Bay Wagon Road grant fund pursuant to sections 1 through 4 of the Act of May 24, 1939 (43 U.S.C. 1181f et seq.).

Subtitle C—Timber Innovation

SEC. 921. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) INNOVATIVE WOOD PRODUCT.—The term ''innovative wood product'' means a type of building component or system that uses large panelized wood construction, including mass timber.

(2) MASS TIMBER.—The term ''mass timber'' includes—

(A) cross-laminated timber;

(B) nail laminated timber;

(C) glue laminated timber;

(D) laminated strand lumber; and

(E) laminated veneer lumber.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Research and Development deputy area and the State and Private Forestry deputy area of the Forest Service.

(4) TALL WOOD BUILDING.—The term ''tall wood building'' means a building designed to be—

(A) constructed with mass timber; and

(B) more than 85 feet in height.

SEC. 922. CLARIFICATION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR WOOD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct performance-driven research and development, education, and technical assistance for the purpose of facilitating the use of innovative wood products in wood building construction in the United States.

(b) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) after receipt of input and guidance from, and collaboration with, the wood products industry, conservation organizations, and institutions of higher education, conduct research and development, education, and technical assistance at the Forest Products Laboratory or through the State and Private Forestry deputy area that meets measurable performance goals for the achievement of the priorities described in subsection (c); and

(2) after coordination and collaboration with the wood products industry and conservation organizations, make competitive grants to institutions of higher education to conduct research and development, education, and technical assistance that meets measurable performance goals for the achievement of the priorities described in subsection (c).

(c) PRIORITIES.—The research and development, education, and technical assistance conducted under subsection (a) shall give priority to—

(1) ways to improve the commercialization of innovative wood products;

(2) analyzing the safety of tall wood building materials;

(3) calculations by the Forest Products Laboratory of the life cycle environmental footprint, from extraction of raw materials through the manufacturing process, of tall wood building construction;

(4) analyzing methods to reduce the life cycle environmental footprint of tall wood building construction;

(5) analyzing the potential implications of the use of innovative wood products in building construction on wildlife; and

(6) one or more other research areas identified by the Secretary, in consultation with conservation organizations, institutions of higher education, and the wood products industry.

(d) TIMEFRAME.—To the maximum extent practicable, the measurable performance goals for the research and development, education, and technical assistance conducted under subsection (a) shall be achievable within a 5-year timeframe.

TITLE X—MAJOR DISASTER FOR WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LAND

SEC. 1001. WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LANDS.

Section 102(2) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(2)'' and all that follows through ''means'' and inserting the following:

''(2) MAJOR DISASTER.—

''(A) MAJOR DISASTER.—The term 'major disaster' means''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) MAJOR DISASTER FOR WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LANDS.—The term 'major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands' means any wildfire or wildfires, which in the determination of the President under section 802 warrants assistance under section 803 to supplement the efforts and resources of the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture—

''(i) on Federal lands; or

''(ii) on non-Federal lands pursuant to a fire protection agreement or cooperative agreement.''.

SEC. 1002. DECLARATION OF A MAJOR DISASTER FOR WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LANDS.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VIII—MAJOR DISASTER FOR WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LAND

''SEC. 801. DEFINITIONS.

''As used in this title—

''(1) FEDERAL LAND.—The term 'Federal land' means—

''(A) any land under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior; and

''(B) any land under the jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service.

''(2) FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES.—The term 'Federal land management agencies' means—

''(A) the Bureau of Land Management;

''(B) the National Park Service;

''(C) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

''(D) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

''(E) the United States Forest Service.

''(3) WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS.—The term 'wildfire suppression operations' means the emergency and unpredictable aspects of wildland firefighting, including support, response, emergency stabilization activities, and other emergency management activities of wildland firefighting on Federal lands (or on non-Federal lands pursuant to a fire protection agreement or cooperative agreement) by the Federal land management agencies covered by the wildfire suppression subactivity of the Wildland Fire Management account or the FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund account of the Federal land management agencies.

''SEC. 802. PROCEDURE FOR DECLARATION OF A MAJOR DISASTER FOR WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LANDS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture may submit a request to the President consistent with the requirements of this title for a declaration by the President that a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands exists.

''(b) REQUIREMENTS.—A request for a declaration by the President that a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands exists shall—

''(1) be made in writing by the respective Secretary;

''(2) certify that the amount appropriated in the current fiscal year for wildfire suppression operations of the Federal land management agencies under the jurisdiction of the respective Secretary, net of any concurrently enacted rescissions of wildfire suppression funds, increases the total unobligated balance of amounts available for wildfire suppression by an amount equal to or greater than the average total costs incurred by the Federal land management agencies per year for wildfire suppression operations, including the suppression costs in excess of appropriated amounts, over the previous ten fiscal years;

''(3) certify that the amount available for wildfire suppression operations of the Federal land management agencies under the jurisdiction of the respective Secretary will be obligated not later than 30 days after such Secretary notifies the President that wildfire suppression funds will be exhausted to fund ongoing and anticipated wildfire suppression operations related to the wildfire on which the request for the declaration of a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands pursuant to this title is based; and

''(4) specify the amount required in the current fiscal year to fund wildfire suppression operations related to the wildfire on which the request for the declaration of a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands pursuant to this title is based.

''(c) DECLARATION.—Based on the request of the respective Secretary under this title, the President may declare that a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands exists.

''SEC. 803. WILDFIRE ON FEDERAL LANDS ASSISTANCE.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands, the President may transfer funds, only from the account established pursuant to subsection (b), to the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct wildfire suppression operations on Federal lands (and non-Federal lands pursuant to a fire protection agreement or cooperative agreement).

''(b) WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS ACCOUNT.—The President shall establish a specific account for the assistance available pursuant to a declaration under section 802. Such account may only be used to fund assistance pursuant to this title.

''(c) LIMITATION.—

''(1) LIMITATION OF TRANSFER.—The assistance available pursuant to a declaration under section 802 is limited to the transfer of the amount requested pursuant to section 802(b)(4). The assistance available for transfer shall not exceed the amount contained in the wildfire suppression operations account established pursuant to subsection (b).

''(2) TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—Funds under this section shall be transferred from the wildfire suppression operations account to the wildfire suppression subactivity of the Wildland Fire Management Account.

''(d) PROHIBITION OF OTHER TRANSFERS.—Except as provided in this section, no funds may be transferred to or from the account established pursuant to subsection (b) to or from any other fund or account.

''(e) REIMBURSEMENT FOR WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS ON NON-FEDERAL LAND.—If amounts transferred under subsection (c) are used to conduct wildfire suppression operations on non-Federal land, the respective Secretary shall—

''(1) secure reimbursement for the cost of such wildfire suppression operations conducted on the non-Federal land; and

''(2) transfer the amounts received as reimbursement to the wildfire suppression operations account established pursuant to subsection (b).

''(f) ANNUAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 90 days after the end of each fiscal year for which assistance is received pursuant to this section, the respective Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Agriculture, Appropriations, the Budget, Natural Resources, and Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Appropriations, the Budget, Energy and Natural Resources, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and Indian Affairs of the Senate, and make available to the public, a report that includes the following:

''(1) The risk-based factors that influenced management decisions regarding wildfire suppression operations of the Federal land management agencies under the jurisdiction of the Secretary concerned.

''(2) Specific discussion of a statistically significant sample of large fires, in which each fire is analyzed for cost drivers, effectiveness of risk management techniques, resulting positive or negative impacts of fire on the landscape, impact of investments in preparedness, suggested corrective actions, and such other factors as the respective Secretary considers appropriate.

''(3) Total expenditures for wildfire suppression operations of the Federal land management agencies under the jurisdiction of the respective Secretary, broken out by fire sizes, cost, regional location, and such other factors as the such Secretary considers appropriate.

''(4) Lessons learned.

''(5) Such other matters as the respective Secretary considers appropriate.

''(g) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this title shall limit the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, Indian Tribe, or a State from receiving assistance through a declaration made by the President under this Act when the criteria for such declaration have been met.''.

SEC. 1003. PROHIBITION ON TRANSFERS.

No funds may be transferred to or from the Federal land management agencies' wildfire suppression operations accounts referred to in section 801(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to or from any account or subactivity of the Federal land management agencies, as defined in section 801(2) of such Act, that is not used to cover the cost of wildfire suppression operations.

TITLE XI—DISASTER RELIEF AND WILDFIRE ADJUSTMENT

SEC. 1101. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM ADJUSTMENT TO ACCOMMODATE WILDFIRE FUNDING.

Section 251(b)(2)(D) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control of 1985 is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking subclause (I) and inserting the following:

''(I) the average over the previous 10 years (excluding the highest and lowest years) of the sum of—

''(aa) funding provided for disaster relief (as that term is defined on the date immediately before the date of enactment of the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017);

''(bb) non-emergency funding provided for wildfire suppression and other wildfire related activities under the 'Wildland Fire Management' and 'FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund' accounts of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior; and

''(cc) 10 percent of the funding for disaster relief designated as an emergency under subparagraph (A)(i); and'';

(2) in clause (ii), by striking ''the Budget Control Act of 2011'' and inserting ''the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017''; and

(3) by striking clause (iii) and inserting the following:

''(iii) For the purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'disaster relief' means—

''(I) activities carried out pursuant to a determination under section 102(2) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(2)); or

''(II) amounts made available, pursuant to a declaration under section 802 of such Act that a major disaster for wildfire on Federal lands exists, to the wildfire suppression operations account established under section 803 of such Act.''.

The Acting CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in House Report 115–378. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. SCHRADER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 115–378.

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 13, line 6, insert ''or'' after the semicolon.

Page 13, strike line 7 (and redesignate the subsequent paragraph accordingly).

Page 13, line 9, strike ''through (6)'' and insert ''through (5)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SCHRADER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Chair, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives DEFAZIO and PANETTA, for offering this amendment with me today. I think it is one of the important changes we can make that will help improve the Resilient Federal Forests Act.

Collaborative forest management activities and categorical exclusions are an important tool in forest management and are designed to help the Forest Service and BLM speed the ability of those agencies to get into areas more quickly to improve forest health.

I believe the use of categorical exclusion should be reserved for reducing hazardous fuel loads, addressing disease and insect infestation, protecting water resources or increasing water yield, and maintaining or enhancing critical habitat. That makes sense. All these activities are very appropriate as designated activities for categorical exclusions.

Listing timber production as a designated activity, I believe, does not work in this context. Timber is a byproduct of all those activities. Therefore, it is unnecessary to actually include it as a specific designated activity.

Our amendment simply strikes timber production from the list of designated activities for categorical exclusion under section 111. It is a pretty clear-cut issue, in my book.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not totally opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the amendment that has been presented by the gentleman from Oregon. I think it is a well-thought-out amendment.

I also appreciate the comments he made, as he is trying to get us past the rhetoric and the dogma, and to try and come up with a truly bipartisan effort to solve the problems that the Forest Service has clearly delineated, giving them the tools that they want to try and solve these problems in the future.

I think the gentleman is also correct when he said that if you go through the list of those that are going to use categorical exclusion, you can't actually do those functions without producing timber. So, at worst, the language that was put in here is redundant. We are still after the same goal. We are still after the same game. That is why I actually will accept the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon and urge its adoption.

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

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the chairman and Mr. WESTERMAN for the bill and being congenial and good folks to work with for a bipartisan piece of legislation we desperately need.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SCHRADER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. KHANNA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 115–378.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 27, beginning line 19, strike subtitle B.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Chairman, my amendment strikes section 311 from the bill. This section would create a forced arbitration program for forestry management. This section of the bill, in my view, usurps judicial oversight. While many agencies conduct quasi-judicial proceedings, there are still agency actions that are appealable to the courts.

Judicial oversight and separation of powers is a core principle of our democracy. The arbitration would be binding, effectively making the Secretary of Agriculture the final judge and depriving the courts of their oversight role.

While the bill terms this as discretionary arbitration, the discretion ultimately lies only with the Secretary of Agriculture. The public has no discretion over whether to submit to binding arbitration or not.

The public's right to challenge an action or inaction in court is an important check on the executive branch. Shielding an agency from review by independent Federal courts could harm access to justice.

The Secretary of Agriculture can designate any objection for binding arbitration up to ten times per year in each of the nine Forest Service regions and each of the 14 State regions.

□ 1630

This allows the Secretary of Agriculture to effectively dismiss about 230 cases every year. According to the Department of Justice, in 2016, the total amount of civil matters and cases brought against the United States with an environmental or land cause of action was only 350. This overly broad power would allow the agency to dismiss some of the most problematic cases every year.

The process also likely violates the nondelegation doctrine. That doctrine prohibits the exercise of constitutional authority given to any branch of government by another branch or nongovernmental private party.

Under the arbitration program set up by this bill, a private party objecting to a management proposal and forced into arbitration would be required to write their own proposal. The appointed arbitrator could then select that private party proposal as the final plan to be carried out by the agency. The arbitrator is not permitted to modify the proposal, and the decision would be binding.

I understand the need to streamline the process, but I think the forced arbitration really deprives people of their access to the courts, and that is why, Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, I claim time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, I have to strenuously oppose this particular amendment because it strikes one of the core provisions of this bill.

From 1989 to 2008, there were 1,125 lawsuits filed against the Forest Service, and hundreds have been filed since that time. Half of the active management lawsuits of the Federal Forest Service account are spent, and 40 percent of all Forest Service lawsuits are brought on this specific point.

In addition to that, the Forest Service, in an effort to try and mitigate against that, simply tries to delay the processes, which creates a culture of analysis paralysis going through there, and at the end they get sued anyway.

This provision is one of few creative efforts we have had that does not impact people's access to justice, but having a binding arbitration pilot program allows us to try and give you the merits of a lawsuit and move forward quickly. This is creative. This is what they need.

If we need to end endless litigation, frivolous lawsuits that impede the

work of our land managers and cost taxpayers millions of dollars, this is the kind of thing that we need to start doing. The Forest Service recognizes they need this. It is about time we recognize they need this, too.

Mr. Chairman, keep this creative approach in the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Chairman, I think the point is not that we need to streamline decisions, or if we have to streamline courts to get rid of frivolous lawsuits, that would be fine, but the problem is the power that is being vested in the Secretary of Agriculture where, if the Secretary of Agriculture shares a view that is not sympathetic to environmental concerns, they can basically dismiss the lawsuits of numerous environmental plaintiffs.

I think this is really about the separation of powers. If there is reform needed in the judiciary, those reforms should be in our courts, but they shouldn't appropriate the power to the Secretary of Agriculture who may have his own or her own views and not give a fair hearing to the environmental groups.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the author of this bill.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I think what we have to realize is that what is happening now is not working. Forest management plans are not being implemented. Region 1, alone, of the Forest Service spent $1.23 million on the Equal Access to Justice Act, paying plaintiffs to sue the Forest Service. That is just since January of 2016.

This is an attempt for the pilot program to do arbitration modeled after baseball arbitration that keeps the ball moving forward. This results in some kind of action taking place. It is not the Secretary of Agriculture making the decision; it is one of a team of arbitrators who are professionals who come together to work for solutions. That is what we need in our forests, and that is why we don't need to include this amendment in the bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chair, once again, I would ask our Members to reject this particular amendment. It is a core provision, one of the few creative efforts, and only a pilot project to try and find a solution. It has received bipartisan support. It has received support from a broad coalition of outside groups. Admittedly, some of those who actively litigate and raise money and profit by it don't like this provision, but most of the other people recognize this is something the Forest Service can use on day one. They need this tool.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. O'HALLERAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 115–378.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 59, beginning line 3, strike subtitle A (and redesignate the subsequent subtitle and sections accordingly).

Page 66, beginning line 19, strike section 903.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, local communities that have the most at stake when it comes to the forest in their backyards deserve their voices to be heard. As someone who lives in a national forest and has worked to review and provide feedback on proposed forest plans, I can assure you that these documents that guide the direction of individual national forests for years are, in fact, a major Federal action.

My firsthand experience is why I propose that we strike the language of section 801 of the bill before us. Section 801 proposes that forest plans not be considered major Federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. If this were to become law, local input would be reduced. We should be looking for ways to increase local buy-in, not undermine it.

In addition, section 903 proposes to modify the determination of extraordinary circumstances so wilderness protections and the protections of the Endangered Species Act do not have to be considered. This is a dangerous provision and allows our bedrock environmental laws to be ignored.

My commonsense amendment would simply remove these concerning sections that allow bureaucrats to make major decisions without considering all the facts. Mr. Chairman, I encourage all my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, this is another one of the amendments that basically guts the whole purpose of this entire bill.

There is nobody who is cut out of the process. None of the public is cut out of the process. What is cut out is redundant, duplicative NEPA analysis, all of which can result in litigation. It simply says you do the process the first time. You don't have to redo it again and again and again and admit the Forest Service to litigation again and again. In fact, they admit 71 percent of all their lawsuits mention these types of provisions in there.

As we said before, these provisions were not coming out of thin air. They are coming from what the Forest Service tells us they need to do their job, the tools they need so they can take the resources they have and do it once the first time and get it over with and do it right and not have to spend it on frivolous litigation.

NEPA is not taken away. The analysis is not taken away. The public is not taken out of the system. All you are simply doing is saying you don't have to do it repetitively, in other words, don't have to do it redundantly. This is one to streamline it. This is what they need desperately.

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

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the fact that there are many items within the bill that do allow for the issues to be addressed. But taking this part of the bill and understanding that, when our national forest plans are put forward, we are part of it—I live in the national forest. I have watched three fires outside my front window. I have lived through watching, time and time again, the ramifications of not addressing these issues appropriately.

I was co-chair of the Arizona Forest Health Oversight Committee for 3½ years and have been addressing forestry issues for 20 years. Mr. Chair, I just simply believe that, when it comes to wilderness areas and other areas of major concern, we should not disregard it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I will say once again, the tools the Forest Service needs to do their job are harmed if these sections do not remain in the bill. It is not talking about public input. It is talking about redundant, unnecessary public review that goes through there that creates unnecessary and redundant litigation. There is a NEPA process that needs to go forward. You just don't have to do it four and five and six times just because. We have an analysis paralysis.

I remind you once again, we have 50 to 70 million acres that are in a desperate, dire situation, ready to explode in catastrophic wildfire. The Forest Service can only get to 3 million acres a year, and part of it is the problems they have that we are trying to remove with these specific provisions. They need these tools. If we don't give them these tools, we exacerbate our wildfire problems. We don't need to do that. We shouldn't do that.

Mr. Chairman, we need to defeat this amendment. It is essential to defeat this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. CÁRDENAS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in House Report 115–378.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle A of title IX, add the following new section:

SEC. 9____. STUDY ON USE OF UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES TO SUPPORT WILDLAND FIRE RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT.

(a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a study to evaluate—

(1) the feasibility, safety, and cost effectiveness of using unmanned aerial vehicles for the purposes of supporting wildland fire response and suppression and forest restoration and management; and

(2) the effect that increased use of unmanned aerial vehicles for such purposes will have on employment.

(b) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study, the Secretary of Agriculture shall consult with the heads of other Federal agencies involved in wildfire suppression and aviation, including the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Transportation.

(c) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Chair, this year, wildfires have devastated the American West. It has been particularly tragic in my home State of California. Entire neighborhoods are gone, and families have been left with nothing.

While we know that proper forest management requires burning, we need to be able to contain wildfires that threaten communities.

This month, wildfires killed 42 people, burned over 245,000 acres, and destroyed an estimated 8,900 structures, most of them people's family homes, according to Cal Fire.

The fires aren't just dangerous themselves, they produce thick smoke, toxic ash, and debris that pose long-lasting risks to our health and to the environment.

These wildfires continue to grow in frequency and ferocity. We must ensure that we are using all of the available tools to prevent and contain these fires. That is why I ask that this amendment, which promotes innovation in wildfire management, be adopted.

The amendment would require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study evaluating the feasibility, safety, and cost effectiveness of using unmanned aerial vehicles, otherwise known as drones, for the purposes of fighting wildfires. It will also study the use of drones for forest restoration and management, which could be effective for replanting remote areas of forest.

The Secretary of Agriculture would have to work with several other agencies that also deal with wildfire suppression and aviation. This amendment would require consultation with the Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration to ensure safety for our aircraft and the pilots flying in the same airspace.

It would also assess the impact of using drones on employment in the U.S. Innovation will take us into the future.

□ 1645

But we need to know, eyes wide open, how this affects the employment landscape of our communities. And that is why these studies are also important.

The Department is required to report to Congress within 2 years of enactment. If implemented, I look forward to seeing the results of this study. I believe it will help add another tool to the toolkit in protecting American lives, homes, property, businesses, wildlife, and forests from devastating fires.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to adopt amendment No. 4, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment. As the gentleman explained, this amendment does direct the Secretary of Agriculture to study the use of unmanned vehicles, or drones, in the responsible forest management wildland firefighting and fire suppression.

Unmanned aerial vehicles are an emerging technology that should be harnessed to benefit our Nation's forests. As a matter of fact, these unmanned vehicles are being used extensively by the private sector to look at their forests, to manage them, to equip them with remote-sensing equipment so that they can cover large areas at a large time and gather much more accurate data than you could actually do on the ground.

By ensuring that our land management practices utilize the cutting edge of available technology, we can ensure the prolonged health of our managed forests, and we can actually use this as a tool to cut down on the number of forest fires, and a better way to respond to those fires.

I hope the gentleman will support the full bill after we add this amendment to it so that he can actually see the implementation of his amendment in practice.

Mr. Chairman, again, I support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Chairman, I like the kind words that my colleagues have said about this amendment, and I hope that it goes forward.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, again, this amendment is good for the bill. I am glad that we can work in a bipartisan way to include it in the bill.

Mr. Chairman, I urge support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. DEFAZIO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in House Report 115–378.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 77, beginning line 4, strike subsection (b) and insert the following new subsection:

(b) CERTAIN EXCLUSIONS.—

(1) CERTAIN LANDS EXCLUDED.—Subsection (a) does not apply to—

(A) the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area established under section 119 of Public Law 96–199 (43 U.S.C. 1783);

(B) lands managed under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.);

(C) lands managed under the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.); and

(D) lands managed under the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.).

(2) CERTAIN REVENUE EXCLUDED.—Subsection (a) does not apply to any revenue that is required to be deposited in the Coos Bay Wagon Road grant fund pursuant to sections 1 through 4 of the Act of May 24, 1939 (43 U.S.C. 2621-2624.).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, this is a bipartisan amendment introduced by myself, GREG WALDEN, and KURT SCHRADER.

Section 913 of the bill requires all public lands managed by the BLM and

five western Oregon districts to be managed under the O&C California Lands Act of 1937. These are statutorily unique lands. They are all contained in the State of Oregon. There are 2.6 million acres in 18 Oregon western counties.

The O&C Act directs the BLM to manage those lands for multiple uses, including sustainable timber harvest, reforestation, protection of watersheds. As Federal lands, counties with O&C acres are unable to collect taxes. The Federal Government realized that put a tremendous burden on the counties, and the revenues are shared 50 percent with the counties and 50 percent with the Federal Government. These are critical revenues for my counties, and we have been trying to enhance management on those lands to help both with employment and with those revenues.

Without this provision, the bill would seem to open up wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, the national trail system, and other statutorily protected areas. It will also protect the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area on Oregon's coast.

So I would ask—I believe that was an oversight in the drafting of the bill since similar protections are provided on Forest Service lands for statutorily reserved areas, and I would urge Members to support this amendment.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although, again, I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment, and I appreciate the gentleman from Oregon catching this and pointing it out. It has never been the intent of this bill to affect wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers. I believe we do have protections in place in the bill, but this reemphasizes that.

I appreciate the gentleman's willingness to work as we worked through the process on this bill. We had some good discussions on ideas, we were able to agree on some of those, and some of them we didn't agree on. But this is definitely one that we agree on needs to be in there.

Although H.R. 2936 includes the important sideboards that ensure appropriate land management practices are implemented on federally protected and sensitive lands, this is just putting some suspenders on with the belt.

This amendment, offered by my colleague from Oregon, builds upon the sideboards already included in the bill, and it ensures that special landscapes within Oregon's O&C lands are treated similarly to other lands that are contemplated in the bill.

Mr. Chairman, I support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his support, and I do thank him for the conversation we had about a number of concerns that I had with the bill, and this addresses one, and the Schrader amendment addressed another.

There are still other concerns. I am hopeful, we have twice passed management bills out of the House, and I did support last Congress' version introduced by the gentleman, 1 of 19 Democrats, I believe at that time, and I am hopeful that, in discussions with the Senate, we move back in the direction of the bill that we passed in the House 2 years ago.

However, the Senate totally stiffed us on that legislation, and I fear that moving the bill to a number of the provisions in this bill, which go further than in the last bill, will make it less likely that the Senate will negotiate. But, I mean, who knows what works with the Senate. So I wish the gentleman well in those discussions.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, again, I support this amendment. I, again, want to say how much I appreciate the gentleman's work and his passion for the forest, not only in his home State of Oregon, but across our country.

I also want to add that, as Americans, we are very passionate about our wilderness areas, about our wild and scenic rivers. I have some of those in my State. And the last thing we want to do is do anything to jeopardize those.

I believe, overall, the bill is going to be great for our forests, but I am glad the gentleman added this amendment. He has still got time to change his mind and support the full bill, which will be great for Oregon and great for other States in the West.

Mr. Chairman, I encourage a ''yes'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. LAMALFA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 115–378.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment made in order by the rule.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 80, after line 9, insert the following new subtitle:

Subtitle D—Wildland Firefighter Recognition

SEC. 931. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

(2) EMPLOYEE.—The term ''employee'' has the meaning given the term in section 2105 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY.—the term ''Federal land management agency'' means—

(A) within the Department of the Interior—

(i) the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

(iii) the National Park Service; and

(iv) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

(B) within the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service.

(4) WILDLAND FIRE.—The term ''wildland fire'' means any non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation or natural fuels, including prescribed fire and wildfire.

(5) WILDAND FIREFIGHTER.—The term ''wildland firefighter'' means—

(A) an employee of a Federal land management agency, the duties of whose position are primarily to perform work directly related to the prevention, control, suppression, management of wildland fires, or support of wildland fire activities; and

(B) an employee of a Federal land management agency who is transferred to a supervisory or administrative position from a position described in subparagraph (A).

SEC. 2. CLASSIFICATION OF WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) DEVELOPMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL SERIES REQUIRED.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in cooperation with the Federal land management agencies, shall carry out a distinct wildland firefighter occupational series that more accurately reflects the variety of duties performed by wildland firefighters.

(2) DESIGNATION.—The official title assigned to any occupational series established under paragraph (1) shall include the designation of ''Wildland Firefighter''.

(3) POSITIONS DESCRIBED.—Paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to any class or other category of positions that consists primarily or exclusively of forestry technician positions, range technician positions, or any other positions the duties and responsibilities of which include—

(A) significant prevention, preparedness, control, suppression, or management activities for wildland fires; or

(B) activities necessary to meet any other emergency incident to which assigned.

(4) CONSULTATION.—It is the sense of Congress that the Director should consult with employee associations and any other groups that represent wildland firefighters in carrying out this subsection.

(5) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act—

(A) the Director shall complete the development of the wildland firefighter occupational series required under paragraph (1); and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall use the wildland firefighter occupational series developed under paragraph (1) in the advertising and hiring of a wildland firefighter.

(b) HAZARDOUS DUTY DIFFERENTIAL NOT AFFECTED.—Section 5545(d)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''except in such circumstances as the Office may by regulation prescribe; and'' and inserting the following: ''except—

''(A) with respect to an employee in an occupational series covering positions for which the primary duties involve the prevention, control, suppression, or management of

wildland fires, as determined by the Office; and

''(B) in such other circumstances as the Office may by regulation prescribe; and''.

(c) CURRENT EMPLOYEES.—Any individual employed as a wildland firefighter on the date on which the occupational series established pursuant to subsection (a) takes effect may elect to—

(1) remain in the occupational series in which the individual is working; or

(2) be included in the wildland firefighter occupational series established pursuant to subsection (a).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chairman, believe it or not, according to Federal agencies, the wildland firefighter does not exist. That is correct. There are men and women around this Nation who work daily to protect our communities from the fires that devastate especially the Western United States, but they are not allowed to call themselves firefighters.

Instead of ''firefighter,'' the Forest Service, BLM, and other agencies use bureaucratic terms like ''forestry technician,'' which fails to recognize the dangers they face and the sacrifices they make to protect others.

My amendment, which I am pleased to offer with my colleague, Representative MARK DESAULNIER from California, represents a bill we have both sponsored, H.R. 3907, as well; which seeks simply to designate these brave men and women the title they have earned by directing the Office of Personnel Management to create employee classes designated as ''wildland firefighters.''

Mr. Chairman, 15 ''technicians'' have passed away this last year fighting wildfires. Several of them are from California. It is unconscionable that, while they perished fighting fires, the agencies that employ them refuse to call them firefighters. We should take action to rectify that failure, and I urge Members to consider our bill, H.R. 3907, to do so.

However, Mr. Chairman, I know that there is additional work to be done with the very bureaucracies which refuse to use the term ''firefighter'' with last-minute concerns and clarifications needed so that the firefighters indeed don't lose benefits, and I note that we will be back.

Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment from further consideration at this time.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. PEARCE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 115–378.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 75, after line 5, insert the following new section:

SEC. 910A. PILOT PROJECT FOR FOREST HEALTH, WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT, AND HABITAT RESTORATION IN NEW MEXICO.

(a) PILOT PROJECT ESTABLISHED.—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall conduct a pilot project within the Lincoln National Forest, Cibola National Forest, and Gila National Forest in the State of New Mexico to analyze and demonstrate the effectiveness of various tools and techniques to address the following natural resource concerns:

(1) Thinning for forest health.

(2) Watershed improvement.

(3) Habitat restoration.

(b) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of Agriculture in carrying out the pilot project established under subsection (a) may conduct applied silvicultural investigations and treatments, including—

(1) silvicultural investigations conducted for the purposes of information gathering and research relating to the natural resource concerns described in subsection (a); and

(2) mechanical thinning.

(c) OBJECTIONS TO SILVICULTURAL INVESTIGATION OR TREATMENT.— The Secretary may not carry out a silvicultural investigation or treatment under this section if a county in which such investigation or treatment would be conducted objects to such investigation or treatment.

(d) ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT.—Forest management activities carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture under this section are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(e) CONSULTATION UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT.—Forest management activities carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture under this section shall be subject to section 123, including subsection (b) of such section.

(f) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—The Secretary shall encourage meaningful public participation during preparation of a silvicultural investigation or treatment under this section.

(g) ARBITRATION PILOT PROGRAM RESOLUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An objection or protest to a forest management activity carried out pursuant to this section shall be addressed through the arbitration program established under section 311.

(2) LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF ARBITRATIONS.—An arbitration described in paragraph (1) shall not be counted towards the limitation on number of arbitrations under section 311(a)(3).

(h) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this section.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 595, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chairman, our national forests are overgrown, and the thinning projects which would restore them to health are delayed by lengthy and costly regulations and litigations. In New Mexico, it takes a look like this: the top picture is a picture of one of our national forests, and the bottom picture is a picture from an area that has been thinned.

Now, take, for example, the Lincoln National Forest near Ruidoso, the Mescalero Forest is butted right up against it, so we are able to get a good comparison.

Now, typically, the forests in the West look like this: widely spaced trees and mostly grass in between, so when the fires came, they were grass fires. The tree rings show us that every 8 years a fire occurred, and it would keep the small underbrush and the small diameter trees, the small, unhealthy ones, it would keep those burned out and our forests, again, looked like this.

But because all of the thinning projects and all of the timber projects have been canceled for decades now, our forests, instead, look like this. When wildfires happen, they burn catastrophically and burn everything in their sight.

So my amendment today simply allows the Forest Service to move forward on balanced thinning programs in large scale. Typically, they do all of the paperwork, all of the studies for small acreage, maybe 30 acres or 50 acres. Since the forests are about a million acres, you would never get through and never get the forest restored to its health, and that is the problem.

The Forest Service has been working with me on the language for this amendment and submitted almost exact language that we have put here on the floor today. They agree with us that they should restore the forest to its health, but the environmental groups and the outside litigation have stopped the programs completely.

Now, in New Mexico, this means jobs, but it also means the health of our environment, and it means the destruction of endangered species, because when the fires burn through, we get the effect on the next page; again, this is that same Lincoln National Forest that we were looking at just a second ago. This is after the Little Bear fire, which burned 255 homes and almost 40,000 acres.

We almost lost the entire town of Ruidoso. If the fire had just capped over the mountain, it would have burned straight down the side. The winds were exactly the direction which would have caused that.

So the Forest Service is agreeing with us that we need to do some thinning, and we are not going to be able to do it without legislative language, so this amendment is being offered here today.

□ 1700

We used to have 123 mills working in New Mexico clearing timber, processing it. We have got vast national

forests, and all of those have been shut down. The spotted owl came along in 1993, and the findings from the Fish and Wildlife Service was that logging was the reason that the spotted owl was going extinct.

Over 20 years later, Dan Ashe, the head of Fish and Wildlife Service, said: Oops, we made a mistake and we burned down the West, and we have ruined our forests over a mistake. There was actually another predator out there. We still have the problem to go in and clean up these forests before they burn and before they look like this.

Another real problem that exists is when we burn our national forests, then the watersheds are going to be choked up with mud, with ash, and with everything else.

This is Bonita Lake there in that same Lincoln National Forest near Ruidoso. It provides the drinking water for several major communities in the southern part of the State. That lake was about 75 feet deep, pristine water, had fish in there. It was a recreational area right in the middle of the national forest.

The Forest Service was alarmed at how much damage was going to occur to this lake if they didn't log above it, so they put in a project. They were sued and work grounded to a halt. They did not get to thin that area above the lake. A fire occurred, this fire that you just saw in the previous slide. Now, that 75-feet-deep lake is filled with 50-feet of mud and ash. It killed all of the fish. It is not suitable for drinking. The community does not have the money in order to drain that lake and to refill it.

So that is what we find in the West because of these forest management processes. My amendment would simply allow the Forest Service to move forward on large-scale projects. They would still have to do all of the studies, everything. They would just be expedited.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, this amendment doubles down on the bad ideas that are in the underlying bill. The 150,000 acre categorical exclusion to remove timber from Gila, Lincoln, and Cibola National Forests has the potential to do more harm than good, and cuts the American public out of the decisionmaking process.

The Forest Service doesn't need this waiver to harvest trees in New Mexico. Last year, the Cibola produced 12,000 metric board feet, and Lincoln and Gila each between 5,000 and 6,000 metric board feet. These are average production numbers across the region.

So I am not sure what problem this amendment is trying to address or how exempting 150,000-acre projects from the environmental review helps the Forest Service meet their mandate of protecting habitat, watersheds, and providing recreational opportunities.

This amendment also exempts the Forest Service from the consultation requirements and the Endangered Species Act. Logging projects untethered from the bedrock environmental protections could potentially impact several species which depend on these forests for habitat, including the Mexican spotted owl and the Gila trout.

Active forest management is not a bad thing if it is done responsibly. If NEPA and the Endangered Species Act are followed, we get good projects, safe habitat restoration—not clear-cutting and loss of critical habitat. Unfortunately, this amendment undermines both of these fundamental laws and should be rejected.

Mr. Chair, I urge a ''no'' vote on the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chairman, the problem we are trying to solve—the gentleman asked the question—is that we are burning our forests down. We are burning up the habitat. We are burning up the endangered species. This was 40,000 acres. We had another fire in the Second District of New Mexico that was over 300,000 acres and they burned without regard. They burned human life. They burned animal life. They burned habitat and they contaminate our waterways.

Those are the problems that we are trying to solve. The Forest Service agrees with us that the restrictions are too great, and they have worked with us on the language, understanding that they must go through the studies, they must do the work that is required, but we can expedite those in order to do larger-scale thinning projects. Otherwise, we will never get the forests in the West cleared up.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment is a good amendment. I urge its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, this amendment would not resolve the issue that my friend from New Mexico has just brought up. The Statement of Administrative Policy from the executive branch raises the concerns of H.R. 2936 and of the land management reforms, which are in the legislation.

It says: ''The administration, however, has concerns about the legislation's revision to the Stafford Act, which would force competition for funding between wildfires on Federal land and other disasters already covered by the Stafford Act, including hurricanes.''

It also says that the legislation doesn't really address the issue of fire borrowing, which is central to dealing effectively and proactively with wildfires, both prevention, and suppression, as the resource is needed.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD the Statement of Administrative Policy by the Trump administration. I also include another Statement of Administrative Policy dated July 8, 2015, which is on the same legislation, but by then-President Obama, which mirrors and reflects the same concerns brought up by the executive branch of President Trump.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 293—RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017—REP. WESTERMAN, R–AR, AND 18 COSPONSORS

The Administration strongly believes that funding for wildland fire management must be addressed in order to enable the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to better manage the Nation's forests and other public lands. The Administration's second disaster funding request, submitted to Congress on October 4, 2017, underscored this belief. The request also noted the Administration's belief that land management reforms are critical to solving the problem of ''fire borrowing''—taking funds from forest management programs to cover fire costs that exceed appropriations—in a comprehensive manner, rather than through a funding-only approach.

The Administration appreciates the intent of H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017, and is supportive of land management reforms like those outlined in the legislation. The Administration, however, has concerns about the legislation's revisions to the Stafford Act, which would force competition for funding between wildfires on Federal land and other disasters already covered by the Stafford Act, including hurricanes.

Wildland Fire Management Funding

Last year, Federal wildfire suppression spending reached $2.9 billion, an amount that signals clearly the need for Congress to address the rising cost of fire suppression operations. The dependence on ''fire borrowing'' to cover funding shortfalls in times of severe wildfire impedes the missions of our land management agencies, including by taking critical funding from programs that help reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, restore and maintain healthy functioning ecosystems, and yield timber production.

The Administration, however, has concerns with re-purposing the Stafford Act to address wildfires. The purpose of the Stafford Act is to assist State, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments that become overwhelmed when responding to and recovering from natural disasters affecting their jurisdictions. H.R. 2936 would modify the Stafford Act by creating a new type of disaster declaration to address the cost of wildfire suppression on Federal land, thereby changing long-standing principles governing Federal support to SLTT governments. As we have seen in this year's historic Atlantic hurricane season, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must continue to be focused on its existing mission, and the Stafford Act's Disaster Relief Fund must remain dedicated solely to that mission.

Instead of the approach outlined in H.R. 2936, the Administration supports a separate, annual cap adjustment for wildfire suppression operations, which will resolve concerns about the sufficiency of funds for wildfire suppression and avoid unnecessary competition for Stafford Act funds.

Improving Forest Management

The Administration appreciates H.R. 2936's recognition that fixing the funding component of fire borrowing will not, on its own, stop the worsening trend of catastrophic wildfires. Meaningful forest management reforms to strengthen our ability to restore the Nation's forests and improve their resilience to destructive wildfires must be a part

of any permanent solution. H.R. 2936's provisions that expedite environmental approval for proactive forest management, including hazardous fuel reduction and post-fire timber salvage and reforestation actions, are important steps forward. The Administration supports and will continue to work with Congress on the details of the forest management reform proposals.

Although the Administration has concerns with H.R. 2936's modifications to the Stafford Act, the Administration will continue working with Congress to enact a sustainable solution to ''fire borrowing'' that does not adversely affect FEMA's critical disaster relief funding and that recognizes the need for a comprehensive solution to the problem of wildfires.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 2647—RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2015—REP. WESTERMAN, R–AR, AND 13 COSPONSORS

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 2647. The most important step Congress can take to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration and management of the national forests and Department of the Interior (DOI) lands is to fix fire suppression funding and provide additional capacity for the Forest Service and DOI to manage the Nation's forests and other public lands. H.R. 2647 falls short of fixing the fire budget problem and contains other provisions that will undermine collaborative forest restoration, environmental safeguards, and public participation across the National Forest System and public lands.

Wildland Fire Management Funding

The Administration appreciates that there is bipartisan agreement that wildland fire management funding needs a legislative fix. The reasons are clear: in fiscal year (FY) 1995, the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture (USDA) spent 16 percent of its budget on firefighting. Today the agency spends more than half of its budget on fire management activities. This fundamentally impedes its missions, including taking critical funding from programs that help reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, maintain healthy functioning ecosystems, and yield timber production.

The wildland fire funding fix in the President's FY 2016 Budget provides the necessary resources for the Forest Service as well as DOI to address wildland fire suppression and rehabilitation needs without resorting to detrimental transfers from other critical forest landscape resilience priorities. Under this fix, which includes a discretionary budget cap adjustment, the Forest Service and DOI could tap disaster funds once they spend 70 percent of their 10-year average of suppression spending, which is the amount of suppression funding requested within the discretionary budget caps. Providing this certainty would preserve critical resources for hazardous fuel reduction and other essential landscape restoration projects, allowing for more acres to be treated, and thereby reducing the risk of fire, and the degree of fire destruction.

The Administration's proposal would immediately increase the Forest Service's capacity to plan and execute restoration projects—including the FY 2016 Budget projection for timber volume sold from 2.9 billion board feet in FY 2014 to 3.2 billion board feet.

In contrast, the requirement in H.R. 2647 to fully fund the ten-year average for wildland fire suppression would mean that less funding is available each year in the agencies' budgets for restoration and risk reduction programs as it is diverted to the ever-increasing ten-year average.

Additionally, the bill repurposes the Stafford Act. The purpose of the Stafford Act is to provide Federal assistance to State, local, and tribal governments to alleviate disaster suffering and facilitate recovery. This bill would instead establish a sub-account within the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) to provide funding for USDA and DOI to perform wildland fire suppression operations on Federal land when suppression funding is exhausted and the President has issued a disaster declaration for such fires. A proposed sub-account under the DRF should not be used to redirect DRF resources in support of non-Stafford responsibilities or to circumvent existing major disaster declarations processes.

Undermining Fundamental Environmental Safeguards

The Administration takes seriously the management of Federal lands consistent with the principles of multiple-use and sustained-yield that are fundamental to the National Forest Management Act and the Federal Land Management and Policy Act and in accordance with long-standing environmental laws including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act, among others. Application of these environmental laws ensures that management activities recognize the economic benefits of Federal lands and the wide range of goods and services that these lands produce.

At the President's direction, Federal agencies, like the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, are working diligently to promote efficiencies in the permitting and land management process. For example, the Forest Service has established additional categorical exclusions for restoration work, has expanded the use of focused environmental assessments, is using adaptive management to allow decisions to last longer, and is better training employees to take advantage of new efficiencies. The Forest Service is also developing new approaches in the wake of catastrophic fires, such as the response to the Rim Fire, which burned 257,000 acres in the summer of 2013, in which the Stanislaus National Forest finalized its NEPA work for restoration and salvage in one year. The Forest Service is also developing projects across larger areas, thereby utilizing efficiencies and providing a longer term and more certain timber supply for local mills. For example, the Black Hills National Forest is implementing a landscape scale approach across 200,000 acres for treating current and future pine beetle outbreaks.

H.R. 2647 includes several provisions that will undermine collaborative, landscape-scale forest restoration by undermining public trust in forest management projects and by limiting public participation in decision-making. The Administration has substantial concerns with the design and scale of the categorical exclusions, provisions related to post-fire salvage and restoration (including unrealistic timelines for environmental assessments), and unrealistic targets for reforestation given current budgetary resources.

The Administration has serious concerns with provisions in the bill related to the Resources Advisory Committees (RACs). The Administration opposes provisions that limit the discretion of RACs by requiring 50 percent of Secure Rural Schools Act Title II funding be spent on timber management projects. H.R. 2647 also assumes RACs can fulfill the role of local forest collaboratives in designing forest restoration projects, though the RACs were not specially set up to do this and in many cases may not have the breadth of stakeholder interest and expertise to do so effectively. Additionally, the Administration opposes restrictions in the bill on the membership of RACs.

Furthermore, the Administration opposes provisions in the bill that require litigants to post a bond when challenging forest restoration projects. As the Forest Service has demonstrated, the best way to address concerns about litigation is to develop restoration projects in partnership with broad stakeholder interests through a transparent process informed by the best available science. Lastly, the bill should include stronger protections for ecologically sensitive areas, tribal sacred sites, and other important lands.

For the reasons set forth above, the Administration strongly opposes H.R. 2647. The Administration looks forward to continued engagement with Congress to address forest management issues, which must begin by providing the Forest Service and DOI with a comprehensive fix to the fire budget problem.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. ROTHFUS). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Mexico will be postponed.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WILLIAMS) having assumed the chair, Mr. ROTHFUS, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2936) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1716

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WILLIAMS) at 5 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.

RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 595 and rule

XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2936.

Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) kindly resume the chair.

□ 1717

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2936) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROTHFUS (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 115–378 offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) had been postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in House Report 115–378 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 2 by Mr. KHANNA of California.

Amendment No. 3 by Mr. O'HALLERAN of Arizona.

Amendment No. 7 by Mr. PEARCE of New Mexico.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. KHANNA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 189, noes 232, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 594]

AYES—189

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallego
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—232

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—11

Barragán
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Cummings
Garamendi
Gomez
Hill
Pocan
Rooney, Thomas J.
Scalise
Smith (NE)

□ 1745

Mr. POE of Texas, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Messrs. WITTMAN, MCCAUL, ALLEN, and FASO changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. BISHOP of Georgia and RYAN of Ohio changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. O'HALLERAN

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 194, noes 226, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 595]

AYES—194

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver

Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—226

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
Lewis (MN)
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—12

Barragán
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Cummings
Garamendi
Gomez
Graves (LA)
Hill
Pocan
Rooney, Thomas J.
Scalise
Smith (NE)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1750

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. PEARCE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 236, noes 184, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 596]

AYES—236

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lynch
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—184

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence

Lawson (FL)	Norcross	Sewell (AL)
Lee	O'Halleran	Shea-Porter
Levin	O'Rourke	Sinema
Lewis (GA)	Pallone	Sires
Lieu, Ted	Panetta	Slaughter
Lipinski	Pascrell	Smith (WA)
Loebsack	Payne	Soto
Lofgren	Pelosi	Speier
Lowenthal	Perlmutter	Suozzi
Lowey	Peters	Swalwell (CA)
Lujan Grisham, M.	Pingree	Takano
Luján, Ben Ray	Polis	Thompson (CA)
Maloney, Carolyn B.	Price (NC)	Thompson (MS)
Maloney, Sean	Quigley	Titus
Matsui	Raskin	Tonko
McCollum	Rice (NY)	Torres
McEachin	Richmond	Tsongas
McGovern	Rosen	Vargas
McNerney	Roybal-Allard	Veasey
Meeks	Ruiz	Vela
Meng	Ruppersberger	Velázquez
Moore	Ryan (OH)	Visclosky
Moulton	Sánchez	Walz
Murphy (FL)	Sarbanes	Wasserman Schultz
Nadler	Schakowsky	Waters, Maxine
Napolitano	Schiff	Watson Coleman
Neal	Schneider	Welch
Nolan	Scott (VA)	Wilson (FL)
	Scott, David	Yarmuth
	Serrano	

NOT VOTING—12

Barragán	Gomez	Scalise
Bridenstine	Hill	Sherman
Brooks (AL)	Pocan	Smith (NE)
Cummings	Rooney, Thomas J.	
Garamendi		

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1755

Mr. CLEAVER changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. FERGUSON changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chair, on the Pearce Amendment, had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 596.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) having assumed the chair, Mr. ROTHFUS, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2936) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 595, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole?

If not, the question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. O'HALLERAN. I am opposed in its current form.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. O'HALLERAN moves to recommit the bill H.R. 2936 to the Committee on Natural Resources with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendments:

Page 41 of the Rules Committee Print 115-36, after line 21, insert the following new section:

SEC. 406. EXTENSION OF SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000.

(a) PAYMENTS EXTENDED.—Section 101 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7111) is amended by striking ''2015'' both places it appears and inserting ''2020''.

(b) SOURCE OF PAYMENT AMOUNTS.—Section 102(b)(3) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7112(b)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

''(3) SOURCE OF PAYMENT AMOUNTS.—The payment to an eligible State or eligible county under this section for a fiscal year shall be derived from any amounts that are hereafter appropriated to carry out this Act.''.

Page 21 of the Rules Committee Print 115-36, line 17, insert ''Any such plan shall include strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation and any forest management activity must be carried out in a manner that is consistent with such strategies.'' after the period.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the motion.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

□ 1800

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill it or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, schools and counties across rural America are facing a funding and economic crisis. It has now been over 2 years since Congress has failed to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools program. This is beyond unacceptable.

Schools and counties across rural America are facing a funding and economic crisis, and the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act will go a long way to helping ensure children get the education they need to achieve success in today's economy.

Across my district, I have heard families, teachers, and school administrators in forest counties tell me about the dire straits schools will be in if SRS is not reauthorized.

In Greenlee County, in eastern Arizona, the school superintendent shared with me that if the county doesn't see SRS dollars, they will have to close the school that provides special education services. This is after the school has already gone through major changes to save money.

Across rural Arizona, schools face issues with access to technology and the educational opportunities that came with them. Reauthorizing Secure Rural Schools will allow more schools to develop innovative educational opportunities.

In Yavapai County, where they are using distance learning, schools can share teachers. Making sure that students don't miss opportunities because they live in rural America is the right thing to do, and reauthorizing SRS will better enable coordination and support for students.

Mr. Speaker, the people of rural Arizona and America are tough and innovative, but the simple fact is that they need resources to keep schools open and educate children. It is past time that we reauthorize SRS, and I call on my colleagues to do so today.

Across rural America and rural Arizona, the need for infrastructure is only growing. In Gila County, a bridge is needed to make it safer for residents to cross a creek. SRS funding would make it possible for the county to make a greater contribution to get the project completed.

If we are serious about passing a bipartisan infrastructure plan, it is critical that we make sure that local communities can begin planning. Reauthorizing SRS would allow that to happen.

Nationally, there are 720 counties and 4,400 school districts that depend on Secure Rural Schools for education, as well as other critical services and programs, like law enforcement and infrastructure.

Rural America is ready for a renaissance, but for it to happen, we need to make sure that folks have equal access to opportunities in school and in the workforce. That means that we need to guarantee that schools have the resources that they need to educate our children and achieve their potential. That means we need to make sure that communities have infrastructure that supports local economies and keeps people safe. That means we need to make sure that rural Americans have a fair shot.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to support my commonsense amendment on behalf of kids across rural America.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Arizona presenting this issue about Secure Rural Schools. I am an old school teacher. I understand how significant and important it is.

The issue, though, for Secure Rural Schools is not the reauthorization, it is finding a funding stream to keep it going. Unfortunately, this amendment doesn't solve the problem. It is not reauthorization, it is the funding, and this provides no funding whatsoever. It doesn't do what we need to do. It simply is another delay tactic.

And let's face it, we are dealing with more significant issues in this Nation, like who is going to win game seven tonight. That is important stuff. That is what we should be talking about. And if you don't pass this forest resiliency act today, there won't be enough trees to make bats for next year's season.

Please vote ''no'' on this amendment, vote ''yes'' on the underlying bill, and let's go home.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of the bill, if ordered, and suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3903.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 189, noes 230, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 597]

AYES—189

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—230

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—13

Barragán
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Cummings
Garamendi
Gomez
Hill
Pelosi
Pocan
Rooney, Thomas J.
Scalise
Smith (NE)
Speier

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1811

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 232, noes 188, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 598]

AYES—232

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cramer
Crawford
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)

Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
Lewis (MN)
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—188

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Comer
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Barragán
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Cummings
Faso
Garamendi
Gomez
Hill
Pocan
Rooney, Thomas J.
Scalise
Smith (NE)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1818

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 598.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 594, "nay" on rollcall No. 595, "yea" on rollcall No. 596, "nay" on rollcall No. 597, and "yea" on rollcall No. 598.

ENCOURAGING PUBLIC OFFERINGS ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3903) to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to expand the ability to use testing the waters and confidential draft registration submissions, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 419, nays 0, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 599]

YEAS—419

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard

Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—13

Barragán
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Cummings
Garamendi
Gomez
Grijalva
Hill
Moore
Pocan
Rooney, Thomas J.
Scalise
Smith (NE)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1824

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 599.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 849, PROTECTING SENIORS' ACCESS TO MEDICARE ACT OF 2017

Mr. BURGESS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–381) on the resolution (H. Res. 600) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 849) to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3922, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS IMPROVE OUR NATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. BURGESS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–382) on the resolution (H. Res. 601) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3922) to extend funding for certain public health programs, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 3903, ENCOURAGING PUBLIC OFFERINGS ACT OF 2017

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, in the engrossment of H.R. 3903, the Clerk be authorized to make such technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the actions of the House in amending the bill.

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

There was no objection.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.RES. 428

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered as the primary sponsor of H. Res. 428, a resolution originally introduced by Representative Murphy of Pennsylvania, for the purpose of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings under clause 7 of rule XII.

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

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 2936, RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 2936, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section numbering and cross-referencing, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF THE MASSACRE OF 11 AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOLDIERS OF THE 333RD FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY WHO HAD BEEN CAPTURED IN WERETH, BELGIUM, DURING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE ON DECEMBER 17, 1944

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of House Concurrent Resolution 43, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 43

Whereas, during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium in December 1944, the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion, an African-American unit, was among the units of the United States Army overrun in the initial German attack;

Whereas eleven soldiers from different batteries of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion escaped capture and tried to return to the American lines;

Whereas the eleven soldiers were Curtis Adams of South Carolina, Mager Bradley of Mississippi, George Davis, Jr., of Alabama, Thomas Forte of Mississippi, Robert Green of Georgia, James Leatherwood of Mississippi, Nathaniel Moss of Texas, George Motten of Texas, William Pritchett of Alabama, James Stewart of West Virginia, and Due Turner of Arkansas;

Whereas, despite the bitter cold and snow, the soldiers walked 10 miles to the town of Wereth, Belgium, where they received shelter at the farmhouse of Mathias Langer, a resident of Wereth;

Whereas the eleven soldiers were captured by a German patrol composed of SS soldiers, who, after dark, marched the unarmed Americans to a nearby field and brutally massacred them;

Whereas, in 1949, a subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate conducted an investigation in connection with massacres and other atrocities committed by German troops during the Battle of the Bulge;

Whereas the report of the subcommittee identified 12 locations at which American Prisoners of War, Belgian civilians, or both were murdered during the Battle of the Bulge;

Whereas the massacre of the 11 African-American soldiers of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion in Wereth was omitted from the report, and the occurrence of this massacre remains unknown to the vast majority of Americans; and

Whereas, in 2004, a permanent monument was dedicated in Wereth to the 11 African-American soldiers of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion who lost their lives in Wereth during the Battle of the Bulge to defeat fascism and defend freedom: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) officially recognizes the dedicated service and ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the United States of the 11 African-American soldiers of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion of the United States Army who were massacred in Wereth, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge on December 17, 1944; and

(2) calls on the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate to correct the omission in the 1949 report of its subcommittee and appropriately recognize the sacrifice and massacre of the Wereth 11.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FTO PASSPORT REVOCATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 425) to authorize the revocation or denial of passports to individuals affiliated with foreign terrorist organizations, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 425

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''FTO Passport Revocation Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. REVOCATION OR DENIAL OF PASSPORTS TO INDIVIDUALS AFFILIATED WITH FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS.

The Act entitled ''An Act to regulate the issue and validity of passports, and for other purposes'', approved July 3, 1926 (22 U.S.C. 211a et seq.), commonly known as the ''Passport Act of 1926'', is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 4. AUTHORITY TO DENY OR REVOKE PASSPORT.

''(a) INELIGIBILITY.—

''(1) ISSUANCE.—Except as provided under subsection (b), the Secretary of State may refuse to issue a passport to any individual whom the Secretary has determined has aided, assisted, abetted, or otherwise helped an organization the Secretary has designated as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189).

''(2) REVOCATION.—The Secretary of State may revoke a passport previously issued to any individual described in paragraph (1).

''(b) RIGHT OF REVIEW.—Any individual who, in accordance with this section, is denied issuance of a passport by the Secretary of State, or whose passport is revoked by the Secretary, may request a hearing before the Secretary not later than 60 days after receiving notice of such denial or revocation.

''(c) REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary of State refuses to issue or revokes a passport pursuant to subsection (a), or if, subsequent to a hearing pursuant to subsection (b), the Secretary issues or cancels a revocation of a passport that was the subject of such a hearing, the Secretary shall, not later than 30 days after such refusal or revocation, or such issuance or cancellation, submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on such refusal, revocation, issuance, or cancellation, as the case may be.

''(2) FORM.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) may be submitted in classified or unclassified form.

''(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term 'passport' includes a passport card.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the terrorist attack last night in New York City comes as a devastating reminder that the enemies of liberty will not cease.

Eight people were killed and 11 more were injured in what law enforcement officials are now calling New York's deadliest terror attack since 9/11.

The perpetrator of this attack was radicalized domestically by ISIS, highlighting the grave threat posed by this terrorist propaganda.

Mr. Speaker, the terrorist last night was an immigrant from Uzbekistan, but we know that even within our midst, there are Americans who sympathize with those who seek to destroy our freedom.

□ 1830

As many as 250 American citizens have sought to travel to Syria, and more than 100 have joined ISIS' ranks. Many of these individuals have received terrorist training while overseas. Some are under the command and control of terrorist leaders who have instructed them to attack the United States whenever. Others are inspired by the perverted ideology of hate that the terrorists post on social media sites. Many of these are American social media sites.

These American citizens are a direct threat to our homeland. Unfortunately, our current safeguards are insufficient to protect us against such vulnerability.

In 2014, a 22-year-old Florida native became the first American to carry out a suicide bombing in Syria. He had battled hard and been trained by al-Qaida's Syrian affiliate for some time. This same American was waved through U.S. border inspections when he traveled home to Florida a year earlier.

After spending some time in Florida, the man made his way back to Syria to kill in the name of al-Qaida. When he ultimately blew himself up in May of 2014, al-Qaida released a video of his last will and testament. He said: ''You think you are safe where you are in America. You are not safe.''

Mr. Speaker, today we are at a dangerous crossroad. As ISIS loses more territory in its so-called caliphate and it collapses, the threat to our homeland will really grow. Americans who have been fighting with ISIS will be looking for ways to come home to stage deadly attacks.

In recent weeks, a man from Alexandria, Virginia, was convicted on terrorism charges for joining ISIS. He was sentenced to 20 years in the penitentiary. This terrorist traitor to our Nation named four other Westerners who had joined ISIS and who left Syria with intentions to do harm in their home countries.

Law enforcement officials and terrorism experts have been warning of this foreign fighter threat for years. This is a serious threat, and we must address it before it becomes worse.

Having betrayed our Nation, we must revoke the privileges that come with an American passport. That is why my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING), and I introduced H.R. 425, the Foreign Terrorist Organization Passport Revocation Act. It authorizes the Secretary of State to revoke passports of those who have joined foreign terrorist organizations.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, this is a legal term, what a foreign terrorist organization is. It is only those organizations.

These individuals are U.S. citizens, but they betray our country. They should clearly not be allowed the privilege of international travel with an American passport, and they should definitely not be able to come back into the United States when they travel overseas, such as in Syria. This bipartisan bill will also stop these Benedict Arnolds from using their passports to travel to other war zones or cross borders to attack any of our allies.

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely nothing in current regulations specifically to support foreign terrorist organizations. The Secretary of State does not have the authority to revoke passports on a broad national security basis.

It is time our laws change and catch up with the modern world and the new and real threats to our Nation. Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. This bill would not strip American of their citizenship. It would deny those Americans who have sided with foreign terrorist organizations the privilege of travel internationally.

The bill also would not impinge on any American's due process rights if they want to appeal the revocation of their passport. Anyone whose passport is revoked or denied is eligible for a due process hearing within 60 days. The bill would actually increase oversight on this process by requiring the State Department to report directly to Congress whenever the Secretary moves to revoke or deny an American's passport on these grounds.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING) for working with me on this bill. We both sit on the Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade as the chair and ranking member. We have both been working on this issue of foreign fighter threats for some time, and we believe this is a good first step to protect our homeland.

I also want to thank Chairman ROYCE for his help in getting this important bill passed in the committee, and also Ranking Member ENGEL from New York, where this unfortunate tragic event occurred last night.

Mr. Speaker, the point is this: the traitors among us who have chosen to

make their allegiance to a murderous ideology instead of the country that gave them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness must face the consequences. If you take up arms with our enemies, you deserve to be treated like one.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, as a New Yorker, my heart aches today. The appalling loss of life on the streets of Manhattan yesterday is a reminder that terrorism remains a threat that demands our focus.

Confronting violent extremism requires sound, reasoned policies; policies proportional to the threat, policies based on good intelligence, careful analysis, and a clear understanding of what we are up against, not policies based on hysterical reactions or biases against certain faiths or nationalities.

I support this bill because it will ensure that the State Department has the tools to prevent American terrorists from traveling abroad or returning to our country.

Under this legislation, the Secretary of State could refuse to issue a passport or revoke a passport for any American who has provided assistance to foreign terrorist organizations. Importantly, it also affords anyone affected the right to an appeals process, helping to ensure due process rights.

This bill is just common sense. It is also a vital aspect of the fight against terrorism. We don't want known threats crossing our borders or slipping from country to country anywhere in the world.

The bill we are considering today would not have, obviously, prevented yesterday's attack, but this is important. This is just a piece of a larger strategy.

The President yesterday called our judicial system, which would prosecute the perpetrator of yesterday's attack, a joke and a laughing stock. I beg to disagree. That is our judicial system, which successfully prosecuted shoe bomber Richard Reid; Ramzi Yousef, the 1993 World Trade Center bomber; Faisal Shahzad, the Times Square bomber; and Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, Osama Bin Laden's son-in-law, in March of 2014.

Mr. Speaker, the judicial branch has done quite a good job in prosecuting terrorists. Let's show them a little confidence and give credit where credit is due.

This is deadly serious. The man suspected in yesterday's attack was reportedly radicalized after he arrived in the United States. We have seen this before in San Bernardino and Orlando. ISIS inspires its adherents from thousands of miles away. That is a problem. And just as this bill gets at a narrow, specific potential vulnerability, policies to deal with homegrown extremists and terrorists should take a hard look at causes and take appropriate action to prevent this sort of radicalization on American shores.

We won't solve this problem by slamming shut America's front door and clamping down on immigration. In fact, doing so just contributes to the terrorist's ideological ammunition and recruitment efforts. There are proven ways to combat terrorism, but demonizing a religion or chipping away at constitutional rights won't work. Those approaches play right into the tactics terrorists use to radicalize vulnerable Americans, making us less safe and less free.

I want to thank Representatives POE and KEATING, who lead our Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade. Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan bill gets to the real concern in the fight against terrorism. I am pleased to support it.

With all due respect to Mr. POE, that is just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING), the ranking member of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 425, the Foreign Terrorist Organization Passport Revocation Act.

Mr. Speaker, I can't speak to the subject of terrorism without condemning the senseless and heinous attack that took place yesterday in New York City. My prayers are with all the individuals and families that were affected. My utmost respect goes to the New York City community that, once again, stands strong, stands together, unintimidated.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced this important piece of legislation, H.R. 425, together with Chairman POE of the Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

As we have discussed, this legislation works to strengthen the tools we have at our disposal for combating terrorism. Put simply, the Secretary of State can refuse to issue or revoke the passport to any individual the Secretary determines is affiliated with or has aided, assisted, or abetted a designated foreign terrorist organization.

The terrorist treats that we face today are complex. Our Federal, State, and local agencies are fighting terrorism at a time when ISIS and other terrorist organizations are able to use new technologies and means of communication to connect with individuals around the globe to fund, to direct, and inspire acts of terror.

Modes of international travel are more accessible and affordable than ever, and cross-border flows of people and goods have increased as we have become more connected in the global world. While these are very positive developments for exchange, competitiveness, and quality of life, we also have to be sure we are managing the risks that go along with this increased connectivity.

We have to make it harder for anyone supporting terrorism to benefit from the increased ease of global movement. That is why our legislation is important. We must ensure that the Secretary of State has the clear authority to refuse a passport to anyone affiliated with or supporting a designated foreign terrorist organization.

This legislation provides that specific statutory authority, as well as improved congressional oversight, are in place. It is also important that there are safeguards in place in order for any law to be successful. That is why I am pleased that H.R. 425 also includes a right of review for anyone whose passport has been refused or revoked.

It is absolutely possible to fight terrorism while still upholding protections for individuals' rights and the rule of law, and it is critical that we do both. In fighting to protect our communities and our democracy, we cannot compromise these very things we are fighting to protect.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman POE for joining me in introducing H.R. 425, the Foreign Terrorist Organization Passport Revocation Act. I would like to also thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their support with this bill as well within the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge that all of our colleagues join together in support of this important legislation.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, let me thank Chairman ROYCE from California, as well as Representatives POE and KEATING for their remarks.

This is a good bill. It is a commonsense bill. It is a good example of how we need to legislate when it comes to terrorism. We are acting out of innovation, out of careful analysis, not out of fear.

We all feel the sting today of an attack on American soil yesterday. As lawmakers, one of our most important jobs is to help keep Americans safe, and there is no worse heartbreak than when we see innocent lives lost.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad we are moving this bipartisan measure today. I am pleased to support it. I urge all Members to do the same.

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

□ 1845

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to emphasize again our prayers for the folks in New York City and for the appreciation of our first responders, who are always there, as you personally know, Mr. Speaker. And the New York tragedy is an example of how they respond and chase and go after terrorists rather than run from terror.

One other thing I want to mention is the Foreign Affairs Committee, we work primarily bipartisan, Mr. Speaker. That shocks a lot of folks here in Washington, D.C., and it sure shocks a lot of folks back home. But most of the

things that come before the House floor have been bipartisan pieces of legislation.

We spend a lot of time on legislation and almost always come to the House floor with unanimous votes, or mostly unanimous votes, on the committee level. We work very well on these issues because these are not partisan issues; these are American issues that we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, there are about 61 designated foreign terrorist organizations that our State Department has said are foreign terrorist organizations and, to prevent individuals in America who side with these organizations, who support these organizations, who are part of these organizations from traveling around the world and coming back home, based upon their activities, this legislation by Mr. KEATING is introduced. Keep them from traveling, because we know who those people are, and keep them, especially, from coming back to the United States.

So what would happen if a passport is revoked and some American is in Syria and is radicalized and he tries to get on a plane? Well, he is not allowed to get on the plane. He is stopped, and then he is turned over, eventually, to Department of Homeland Security and our Justice Department and handled that way.

Now, there are only a few places under our law where a person's passport can be revoked. Not paying your child support, drug trafficking, sex tourism—those are three of the examples. So we are not talking about a lot of examples, but we are talking about this example.

I am a former judge, and I know Mr. KEATING is a former prosecutor. Due process for Americans is always important. The Supreme Court has already ruled on whether or not passports can be revoked under certain circumstances, and they have affirmed the authority of the State Department to revoke passports in specific cases based upon national security reasons.

This bill allows for due process of those people who have their passports revoked. This is a good step in protecting the United States. This is bipartisan legislation. I think it is very important that we take this step.

Once again, my prayers, our prayers, are for those folks in New York. But, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to allow terrorists to have their day. We are not going to allow them to have their way.

And that is just the way it is.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 425—the FTO Passport Revocation Act of 2017—by my friend and colleague Chairman TED POE. I cannot help but see this measure as a common sense tactic to prevent terrorists from entering or re-entering our country. However, more needs to be done to build on this useful foundation for security from terrorists originating in this country or foreign-based terrorists.

Just yesterday, the streets of New York were the scene of carnage caused by a man from Uzbekistan who won a diversity visa lottery to enter this country in 2010. He has lived here for seven years before going on the murderous rampage that killed 8 people and injured 12 others. Clearly, we need to look closer at the background of those admitted through this lottery as they could eventually obtain a U.S. passport. That was the conclusion by the Government Accountability Office ten years ago—three years before New York terror suspect arrived in this country.

The GAO report in 2007 called the diversity visa program "an open door" for terrorists. According to the report 9,800 people from countries designated by the State Department as State Sponsors of Terrorism had used the program to enter the country. These people could eventually qualify for a U.S. passport.

We also must be more vigilant about people coming from countries not designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism. The 9/11 Commission reported back in 2004 that as many as six of the hijackers of the three planes—who were from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates and Lebanon—had used fraudulent or manipulated passports to enter the United States. In 2013, a Saudi citizen entering the United States through the Detroit airport was detained because he couldn't satisfactorily explain why he was carrying a pressure cooker like the one used in the Boston marathon bombing. However, upon inspection, his passport suspiciously had a missing page. Would that have been caught without the presence of the pressure cooker? We are told that even the slightest tweak to a passport will be caught, but one failure could result in a terrorist entering our country, and they could eventually become terrorist sleepers who acquire a U.S. passport.

Finally, in order for the FTO designation to be effectively used to stop terrorists from getting passports or having their passport revoked, our government must make that designation in the first place. I tried for two years to get the previous administration to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist organization. They finally did so in 2013, but how many potential terrorists may have gotten through before then and acquire sufficient status to receive a U.S. passport? We also need to use the FTO designation to identify those giving support to terrorist organizations, especially in cases of such support coming from those living in the United States who could be or potentially could be U.S. passport holders.

As I said earlier, I consider H.R. 425 a common sense measure on which to build, but we must take steps to make this bill as meaningful as it must be for our security. I ask my colleagues to approve this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 425, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

URGING ADHERENCE TO THE "ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS" POLICY BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON THE QUESTION OF HONG KONG

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 422) urging adherence to the "one country, two systems" policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of the Hong Kong, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 422

Whereas the People's Republic of China assumed the exercise of sovereignty over the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 20 years ago, on July 1, 1997;

Whereas the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of the Hong Kong (in this resolution referred to as the "Joint Declaration") required China's National People's Congress (NPC) to pass the "Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" (in this resolution referred to as the "Basic Law") consistent with the obligations contained in the Joint Declaration, which was approved by the NPC on April 4, 1990;

Whereas relations between the United States and Hong Kong are fundamentally based upon the continued maintenance of the "one country, two systems" policy stipulated in the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–383; 22 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.) and established by the Joint Declaration;

Whereas under the "one country, two systems" policy established by the Joint Declaration, Hong Kong "will enjoy a high degree of autonomy except in foreign and defense affairs" and "will be vested with executive, legislative and independent judicial power including that of final adjudication";

Whereas Hong Kong's autonomy under the "one country, two systems" policy, as demonstrated by its highly developed rule of law, independent judiciary, and respect for the rights of individuals, has continued to make Hong Kong the preferred residence for over 85,000 United States citizens, and at least 1,400 United States businesses operate in Hong Kong;

Whereas the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law declare that the lifestyle and social and economic systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged for 50 years after the 1997 reversion;

Whereas the Basic Law guarantees Hong Kong residents the freedoms of speech, press, publication, association, assembly, demonstration, religious belief and activity, academic research, and the rights to form unions and to strike, among others;

Whereas the Basic Law also guarantees Hong Kong residents the right to vote and to stand for election;

Whereas although the Basic Law states that "the ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures", the actual process

for nominating eligible Chief Executive candidates remains heavily influenced by the Government of China;

Whereas widespread frustration with the lack of progress toward a democratic selection of candidates for Chief Executive provoked large-scale public demonstrations in late 2014, popularly known as the ''Umbrella Movement'', that involved hundreds of thousands of demonstrators and the occupation of certain public spaces for as long as 79 days;

Whereas, although Hong Kong continues to enjoy high levels of economic freedom and judicial independence, certain recent actions by the Government of China are inconsistent with its stated commitments to Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and the preservation of the rule of law;

Whereas international press reported that from October through December 2015, four employees of Mighty Current publishing house and its affiliated bookstore, Causeway Bay Books, a Hong Kong seller of publications critical of Chinese leadership, disappeared under suspicious circumstances from Hong Kong, Thailand, and mainland China, in potentially the most serious breach of the ''one country, two systems'' policy since 1997, which has had a chilling effect on the freedoms of speech and publication in Hong Kong;

Whereas international press reported that—

(1) Gui Minhai, a Swedish citizen and the co-owner of Mighty Current, was last seen in Thailand in October 2015;

(2) The general manager of Mighty Current, Lui Bo, and the business manager, Cheung Jiping, disappeared while on a visit to mainland China around October 2015; and

(3) Lee Bo, who holds British and Chinese citizenship and is a permanent resident of Hong Kong, disappeared from Hong Kong on December 30, 2015;

Whereas Mr. Lui, Mr. Cheung, and Mr. Lee each briefly returned to Hong Kong in March 2016 to ask Hong Kong police to drop their missing persons' cases before immediately returning to mainland China;

Whereas Lam Wing Kee, another Causeway Bay Books bookseller, testified before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China that he was detained by officials in Shenzhen, China on October 24, 2015, moved to a detention facility more than 1,300 miles away, and held incommunicado and subjected to ''endless interrogation'' for seven and half months, during which he was forced to produce multiple, coerced confessions of ''selling books illegally'';

Whereas on November 7, 2016, while the Hong Kong High Court was considering its final ruling to determine if the oaths sworn by certain Legislative Council candidates were in accordance with Article 104 of the Basic Law, the Standing Committee of the NPC issued its own interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law in an attempt to foreclose the opportunity for the legislators-elect to retake their oaths and assume office;

Whereas that interpretation of Article 104 by the Standing Committee of the NPC represented the first time it had issued such an interpretation while a Hong Kong judge was deliberating on the case in question and only the second time it had done so in the absence of a request from Hong Kong authorities;

Whereas according to the Hong Kong Bar Association, that preemptive interpretation was ''unnecessary and inappropriate'' and ''created the impression that the [Standing Committee] is effectively legislating for Hong Kong, thereby casting doubts on the commitment of the Central People's Government to abide by the principles of 'one country, two systems' '';

Whereas on November 15, 2016, the High Court ruled that the oaths taken by Yau Wai-ching and Baggio Leung Chung-hang were invalid, and barred the two from serving as members of the Legislative Council;

Whereas on December 16, 2016, then Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and Secretary of Justice Rimsky Yuen Kwok-keung filed for judicial review of the oaths taken by Lau Sui-lai, Nathan Law, Leung Kwok-hung, and Edward Yiu Chung-yim;

Whereas on July 14, 2017, the High Court ruled that the oaths taken by Lau Sui-lai, Nathan Law, Leung Kwok-hung, and Edward Yiu Chung-yim were invalid and barred the four of them from serving as members of the Legislative Council;

Whereas in August 2017, the Hong Kong Government appealed the original sentences of three ''Umbrella Movement'' leaders, Joshua Wong, Nathan Law, and Alex Chow and asked for prison time after they had already completed their previous community service sentences;

Whereas the Hong Kong Court of Appeal subsequently imposed prison sentences on Joshua Wong, Nathan Law, and Alex Chow of six, seven, and eight months respectively, which effectively bars them from running for political office for five years; and

Whereas these developments have called into question Hong Kong's highly developed rule of law, independent judiciary, and respect for individual rights, which are fundamental to its way of life and economic prosperity: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes, consistent with the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, that—

(A) Hong Kong continues to play an important role in today's regional and world economy, with strong economic, cultural, and other ties to the United States;

(B) respect for civil liberties, open markets, rule of law, and judicial independence are all integral aspects of Hong Kong's lifestyle and social and economic systems; and

(C) the authority of the United States Government to treat Hong Kong as a non-sovereign entity distinct from China, for the purposes of United States laws relating to trade, finance, transportation, economic and cultural exchange, travel, law enforcement cooperation, export controls, and other matters, depends on Hong Kong remaining sufficiently autonomous; and

(2) urges adherence to the ''one country, two systems'' policy established by the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law with respect to—

(A) Hong Kong's exercise of a high degree of autonomy;

(B) its enjoyment of executive, legislative, and independent judicial power; and

(C) the robust protection of the fundamental rights of Hong Kong residents guaranteed by Chapter III of the Basic Law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Ranking Member ENGEL for authorizing this important measure on Hong Kong, the city once known as the Pearl of the Orient.

I commend the gentleman for strongly advocating for Hong Kong's continued adherence to the ''one country, two systems'' policy that has allowed for Hong Kong's autonomy and prosperity for so long. I was happy to join him as an original cosponsor of this important measure.

During a recent trip that I led to Hong Kong, I heard firsthand how measures like this are helpful in keeping the pressure on Beijing to keep its commitment to the Joint Declaration.

Twenty years have now passed since the handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China. At the time, the U.S. Congress played a vital role in the continuity of the U.S. relationship with Hong Kong by passing the Hong Kong Policy Act in 1992. This act established that the U.S. would treat Hong Kong as a nonsovereign entity distinct from China on commercial, cultural, and law enforcement matters so long as it remained ''sufficiently autonomous.''

Since the handover, Hong Kong has continued to be a global economic force and a financial hub. In recent years, however, it has also begun to face increased social, economic, and political challenges, including external pressures.

Mr. Speaker, we saw the Umbrella Movement protest in 2014, which was led by youth seeking to liberalize the electoral system and introduce true universal suffrage to Hong Kong in accordance with the Joint Declaration between Great Britain and China. In the intervening years, we have witnessed booksellers kidnapped from Hong Kong, Thailand, and Mainland China; legislator oaths being invalidated; and the jailing of protest leaders.

For many of us here in Congress, there is growing concern about the apparent increased role of Beijing in the affairs of Hong Kong. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is important to reiterate here today that our special treatment of Hong Kong is dependent upon it remaining sufficiently autonomous. We want to see Hong Kong's highly developed rule of law, independent judiciary, and respect for individual freedoms remain as the lifeblood of Hong Kong and its economic prosperity as guaranteed, again, by China and Great Britain in the Joint Declaration.

Passage of this resolution demonstrates our support for the continuation of the ''one country, two systems'' policy in Hong Kong, so I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of this measure.

Let me start by thanking our chairman on the Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE of California, for his leadership and for working with me to bring this measure forward.

I introduced this resolution with Representatives CHABOT, YOHO, SHERMAN, and SMITH, and I want to thank them all for their partnership.

I really listened intently to Mr. YOHO and also know that we make progress on the Foreign Affairs Committee because, as Mr. POE of Texas said, we work in bipartisan measure, and we try to agree on the language and we try to make sure that the U.S. Congress speaks with one voice so that both our friends and adversaries around the world will understand that we put partisanship aside. We leave it at the water's edge, and I think that is very important.

I think the kind of people the Foreign Affairs Committee attracts to serve on the committee, on both sides of the aisle, are the kind who keep perpetuating this bipartisan spirit because we have differences in policies, for sure, but we are all Americans. We all want to keep each other safe, and we all want to make sure that America does the right thing and that others do the right thing to America as well.

So when we have the incident like we had yesterday with the terrible terrorist attack in Manhattan, it makes us pause, as a Congress, and think about what this all means.

People in Hong Kong were made promises as well. They were made promises years ago that China would be one country, including Hong Kong, but two systems, that Hong Kong would be its independent system. And, of course, the Chinese officials and Beijing regime have tried every which way to go after student protesting, curbing the rights and values of the people of Hong Kong, so this resolution is really very, very important.

I thank, again, Representatives SMITH, SHERMAN, YOHO, and CHABOT. But I also want to recognize Doug Anderson and Sean O'Neill on the chairman's staff for their contributions to this resolution, and Jennifer Hendrixson-White on my staff. It is a great example, again, of bipartisanship when it comes to foreign policy. We work together and we produce what I regard as superior products.

For decades, Mr. Speaker, the United States has shared an important, unique relationship with Hong Kong. That relationship has been based on Hong Kong's autonomy from Mainland China. This resolution underscores our national security interest in seeing Hong Kong remain autonomous at a time when we have seen some troubling trends.

Twenty years ago, at the time of the handover, China made a commitment that Hong Kong would continue to enjoy its special status. Today, China claims that the 1997 Joint Declaration is a so-called ''historical document'' that has, again, ''no practical significance.'' But the UK and the United States believe in international law, and we are committed to holding China to its word, again, a ''one country, two systems'' form of government in Hong Kong.

This approach was experimental when the Chinese and British first devised it. You may remember that Hong Kong was a British colony. The Chinese Government essentially said that Hong Kong would continue to have its own executive, legislative, and judicial rights, that the people of Hong Kong would continue to enjoy fundamental rights guaranteed in Hong Kong's laws. But Beijing is now backing away from its commitments, even declaring the Joint Declaration a historical document with no relevance today.

Meddling in Hong Kong's elections by China's National People's Congress led to the Umbrella protests in 2014. Hong Kong residents critical of the People's Republic of China have disappeared, while the presence of the People's Liberation Army has grown.

The credibility of Hong Kong's courts has suffered following decisions to send Umbrella Movement student leaders to prison after they had already served their previous sentences. Academic freedoms have eroded. Self-censorship has grown, and journalists face regular harassment.

So we are worried, Mr. Speaker. We are worried about Chinese encroachment, about what is going to happen to the people of Hong Kong, and about the way China's newly aggressive posture is going to affect our relationship with Hong Kong in the future.

Twenty years after accepting the so-called ''one country, two systems'' model, China's objective now seems to be making Hong Kong and the mainland ''one country, one system.'' This is not what the government in Beijing, the international community, the United States, Great Britain, or the people of Hong Kong signed up for.

So this issue raises bigger questions, Mr. Speaker:

To what degree will the Chinese Government live up to its international commitments as China continues to expand economically and grow in stature on the global stage?

This measure says, ''Enough.'' It sends a message to China that we in the United States Congress expect Beijing to keep its word. That is not asking too much. It reiterates that our special bond with Hong Kong is based on our shared values, the values of democracy, and that we want to see that relationship endure for years to come.

So I am grateful to my colleagues for working on this measure with me, especially Mr. YOHO. I ask support from all Members.

□ 1900

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me again remind everyone that Hong Kong is special because of its judicial independence and strong rule of law that is supposed to be protected under the ''one country, two systems'' approach. That is also the reason why the United States shares such a strong strategic relationship with Hong Kong.

This resolution is a reminder of why our ties with Hong Kong are so important, and a call for all parties to respect the decades-old commitments that have underpinned Hong Kong's autonomy. At a time when China is growing more and more aggressive in its neighborhood, the United States cannot be seen as ceding ground. We need to stand up for our friends. We need to stand up for our values. We need to stand up for our interests. We need to hold all countries to their commitments, just as the United States lives up to our own.

I ask for all Members to support this measure. I thank our chairman, ED ROYCE, and Mr. YOHO for their remarks.

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

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

I, too, want to thank the ranking member, Mr. ENGEL; Mr. ROYCE, the chairman of the committee; Doug Anderson; and, of course, Hunter Strupp. I chair the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee. It has been a bipartisan committee, and to see everybody come together to work on these different situations, and different bills and resolutions, it is so important that we project a unified body.

I would think China, as they move forward, would look hard to honor their commitment that they made because it is not just Hong Kong they are influencing. It is all of the other countries in the world, and it will determine future negotiations on how China, Beijing, honors their commitment that they made with Hong Kong that the other nations will look at.

Hong Kong plays an important role in today's regional and world economy. Its open market and strong rule of law have served as an example to the region of how freedom and a rules-based society can foster a positive environment for its people's happiness and prosperity.

The U.S. has benefited greatly from strong economic cultural ties to Hong Kong, and I would venture to say, the world has benefited from that. We want to continue this relationship, but to do so, Hong Kong must remain sufficiently autonomous. Our President is headed on a 5-country, 12-day tour of the Asia area at the end of the week, and it will be his first time visiting China as President.

With this resolution, we send a strong message from Congress about our support for Hong Kong's continued prosperity and special status. Thus, we urge faithfulness to the ''one country, two systems'' policy, as established by the joint declaration and the basic law with respect to Hong Kong's autonomy and its enjoyment of the executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Hong

Kong's independent judiciary must be sacrosanct.

In closing, I would like to thank Ranking Member ENGEL again and the original cosponsors: Mr. SMITH, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. SHERMAN, and CONNOLLY.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I commend Ranking Member, Mr. ENGEL, along with Chairman YOHO, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. SHERMAN, for introducing H. Res. 422.

I am an original cosponsor of this legislation. As the Cochair of the bipartisan and bicameral Congressional-Executive Commission on China, I have been gravely concerned by the Chinese government's efforts to curtail Hong Kong's autonomy and crush pro-democracy voices in this city.

Twenty years ago, China promised to guarantee Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms for 50 years through the Sino-British Joint Declaration. These promises have been needlessly strained in recent years, calling into question the viability of a 'One Country, Two Systems' model that has provided great benefits to both China and the world.

The threats to Hong Kong's autonomy and its freedoms are progressing. At the recent 19th Party Congress, Communist Party General Secretary and President Xi Jinping reiterated the fact that Hong Kong's autonomy is limited by Beijing's ''comprehensive jurisdiction''—meaning that Beijing has the final say on what freedoms are exercised in Hong Kong and who gets to lead the city's government.

On October 11, 2017, a British human rights activist, Benedict Rogers, was denied access to Hong Kong by the Chinese government. Mr. Rogers was also warned not to continue meeting with pro-democracy supporters in Hong Kong by the Chinese Embassy in London.

Beijing is now telling foreigners with whom they can meet in Hong Kong and barring entry to those who will not comply.

This is a chilling development that should be a concern from all countries and corporations that have an interest in Hong Kong's freedoms. Maintaining these freedoms and the rule of law are vital economic interests of the United States.

The governments and legislatures of the UK and the United States should work together to ensure that the Sino-Declaration Joint Declaration remains in force to protect Hong Kong's unique way of life.

Xi Jinping also said recently about Hong Kong that he would ''never allow anyone, any organization, or any political party, to separate any part of Chinese territory from China . . . and that attempts to endanger China's sovereignty and security, to challenge the power of the central government . . . [crosses] the red line.''

Given Beijing's expansive view of its own security to include anyone peacefully seeking political reforms or rights protections, these are ominous words indeed.

Beijing has ramped up efforts to destroy the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. This past year, six elected legislators were disqualified after the National People's Congress intervened in Hong Kong's judiciary. Then, in August, a Hong Kong court issued heavier sentences for Joshua Wong, Nathan Law, and Alex Chow, leaders of the peaceful Umbrella Movement of 2014.

Mr. Wong, Mr. Law, and Mr. Chow should now be considered Hong Kong's first political prisoners. Though Joshua Wong and Nathan Law are out on bail at the moment pending an appeal, they face other charges and may be put back in prison in the future. They likely will not be the last political prisoners in Hong Kong, as other Umbrella Movement leaders were convicted recently, including Professor Benny Tai.

Senator MARCO RUBIO and I, with whom I cochair the CECC, have announced our intention to nominate Hong Kong pro-democracy Umbrella Movement for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. I hope all Members will consider signing on to that initiative.

I support this resolution, but it should not be our last word. In 1992, the U.S. Congress passed the Hong Kong Policy Act, saying that U.S. policy toward Hong Kong was contingent on the preservation of Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms. With these fundamental elements being diminished by the Chinese government, we should consider amending a bill passed 25 years ago to better protect U.S. interests.

That is why I introduced, along with Congressman TIM WALZ (a fellow CECC Commissioner), the Hong Kong Human Rights & Democracy Act (H.R. 3856)—a bill that I introduced in the last Congress and which has been introduced by Senator MARCO RUBIO and Senator BEN CARDIN in the Senate.

If Hong Kong is to be just another Chinese city, then we have the responsibility to reassess whether Hong Kong warrants special status under U.S. law.

We all have a stake in ensuring Hong Kong remains an open city, with the rule of law and guaranteed rights currently unavailable in Mainland China.

I support passage of this bill and thank the gentleman from New York for his leadership on this issue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 422, as amended.

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

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: ''A resolution urging adherence to the 'one country, two systems' policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE PASSING OF STANLEY COOLIDGE AND ROSEANN HANNAH

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness I rise tonight to honor the passing of Stanley Coolidge and his fiancee, Roseann Hannah.

Their lives were tragically lost on October 9, 2017, while trapped in their northern California home as it was destroyed by wildfire. What began as the faint smell of a distant fire quickly turned to tragedy as the area surrounding Stanley's longtime home was ignited rapidly by a fast-approaching fire. As Stan and Roseann attempted a hurried evacuation, the house was engulfed by flames before they could escape.

Stan was a retired attorney, born in San Francisco, but lived his last 50 years in the mountains of Loma Rica, California. Roseann was a resident of Grass Valley, California. Both she and Stan were very valued members of their communities.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Coolidge and Hannah families as we ask the Lord's blessings for comfort and healing at this very tragic, very sad time, as well as the families of all who we have lost as a result of the fires in the West.

Stan and Roseann, you will be missed.

TAX REFORM NEEDS TO BE NEGOTIATED OPENLY

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying to my brother, Steve, back in Ohio: I am so very proud of you, your courage, your goodness, and your honor.

Mr. Speaker, meanwhile, President Trump and the Republicans are doing everything to railroad tax breaks through this Congress to the top 1 percent with no open hearings, with deals being cut in the Speaker's office. So I say: Whoa.

It is worth taking a step back to talk about what a good tax plan contains. A good tax plan puts money back in the pockets of middle class working families and small business owners. A good tax plan spurs job creation right here in the U.S.A. Yet everything we have seen and heard from the Republicans does exactly the opposite.

The goal should be to create more stability in our economy, not raise the deficit. We have got to stop businesses from shipping jobs overseas as companies hold their money offshore. They should bring it back home.

Tax reform shouldn't be negotiated in secret. Why should lobbyists know more about the bill than Members of Congress? A tax bill shouldn't explode our deficit or threaten your 401(k) plan or hurt Medicare and Medicaid.

It is time for Republicans to do their jobs, put forward a budget-balancing tax plan that helps American families, not just billionaires and multimillionaires; and bring the plan forward in sunlight, not backroom dealings.

STOP HABITUAL ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSERS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Sergio Jose Martinez was trolling a parking garage in sanctuary city Portland, Oregon, armed with a knife. He set his sights on his prey, a defenseless 65-year-old woman, and he attacked her.

But the woman fought back and pressed the panic button in her car. Martinez, the coward, fled the scene, but he was caught. Get this, Mr. Speaker: Martinez, after serving several stints in U.S. penitentiaries, has been deported over 20 times. But the criminal does his time, gets deported, and just comes back into the United States.

Our border protectors do the best they can, but they are outmanned, outgunned, and outfinanced by the drug cartels, criminal gangs, and outlaws trying to enter the United States.

The Border Security for America Act authorizes a border wall, both physical and virtual, puts more boots on the ground, more boats in the water, and gives more equipment to our law enforcement.

We must keep criminals like Martinez out of the United States.

And that is just the way it is.

DIVERSITY IMMIGRANT VISA PROGRAM NEEDS TO END

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

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn those lost and injured in yesterday's terror attack in New York City. The New York City Police Department is truly the greatest police force in the world, and they showed us why yesterday.

It is this body's obligation to pursue policies that help prevent and recover from terrorist attacks. It is a responsibility I am privileged to share as chairman of the Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications.

The alleged perpetrator came to our country legally using the Diversity Immigrant Visa program. As a matter of security and commonsense, an immigration system that selects winners like a game of bingo should end.

I also ask that Congress consider the bipartisan STOP Act, legislation I proposed with Mr. ESPAILLAT from New York to help local jurisdictions install protective bollards in areas with high pedestrian traffic. Vehicle attacks are tough to prevent, but the STOP Act will protect Americans and make them safer.

Mr. Speaker, I send prayers for the injured and the families of the lost.

COLLEGES NEED TO BE MORE TRANSPARENT

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, today is the early action deadline for many colleges in the United States. Thousands of students who are submitting their applications are anxiously hoping for entry into a college, community college, or postsecondary school.

As students try to determine what schools are right for them, it is clear they are missing some key information—information we all wish we had for our children: How likely are they to graduate? How long will it take to earn a degree or their certificate? How likely are they to find a job? How much money will they earn if they do find a job?

As a parent, I know this information will be helpful. That is why I introduced the College Transparency Act. My legislation would utilize and make meaning out of the data we currently gather at the Federal level to enable students and parents to make informed decisions.

I have over 35 years in workforce development and postsecondary education. I understand the difficulties that people have in making informed decisions about what is best for their future career. I also understand the reporting expectations for career colleges and universities. I understand which institutions have the information available and how they provide it. I also understand the burdens that occur in providing that information.

Despite the incredible investment involved and the risk in pursuing a postsecondary education, we and students are left with too little information to answer the most basic questions: What can students expect to pay out of pocket? Can you imagine that really they cannot determine how much it will cost them to complete a postsecondary program? How do students fare in the labor market after leaving college? How likely are they to fare in order to enter into the labor market? How do students fare on other metrics of success we all consider important, like earnings, and loan repayment?

A prospective student doesn't have the information about which programs at which institutions provide an adequate return on their investment, and on their parents' investment.

As a consumer and a father, it is difficult for me to wrap my head around the idea that Americans have so little information about potentially what may be the largest investment they make in their lives, and certainly, the second largest. I am the father of six children. The reality is that we are investing and putting six children through a college or a postsecondary program. Think about how much money goes into that. Yet we operate in a vacuum on information.

When you shop online, you are able to compare products, you are able to compare costs, you are able to compare features, the value to the consumer. At this point in time, try to do that about programs at a college, university, or career school. Try to compare one university's nursing program to another; or the architecture program, or history program, or the nursing program in a college. Try to find that information. You won't find it online. Try to call the university. Good luck on that.

It is not that they don't try to provide it. In fact, they provide reams of data. The reality is that the current system simply doesn't gather that data in a manner that is useful to consumers, the people that ultimately pay the bill.

The College Transparency Act would enable students to answer crucial questions, such as how likely they are to enter the workforce successfully, or what their chances are of transferring from a community college to a 4-year college and being able to graduate.

Students past and present are owners of the $1.4 trillion outstanding Federal debt, and the clock is ticking. It is time for students, families, and guidance counselors involved in the college decisionmaking process to be able to assist students and have access to information that will make this huge investment make sense. Otherwise, we leave young people to make decisions based on: Well, those colors on the band uniform are really cool; or they have a good football team; or it seems like they have a really nice social life.

But, ultimately, what we are making is an investment into the future of our children and the future of this country. They have massive money invested, and let's be honest, we all do as taxpayers as well. We have a huge investment in the preparation of young people for the workforce.

It is time to streamline and update our higher education information system so that families and students can make better decisions on their path to long-term success. It is time to utilize and make meaning out of the data we currently collect to assist them in making the choice.

□ 1915

The question I am asked is: Why did I submit the College Transparency Act? I spent 35 years operating a private career school group and working in workforce development. I worked at Chrysler Corporation, moved to another company, and also retired out of that field.

The point is, I have worked in the field for 35 years. I understand the data that is reported. I understand the challenges that people have in trying to sort out what is the best career path for them, how likely are they to succeed in that career path, and what is it going to cost to go to school?

This information all exists—and we will talk about that tonight—but it isn't made available in some coherent manner to students, and we need to fix that.

We also can't tell students how long, on average, it takes them to complete their program. It used to be the day where they used to call them 4-year colleges. The reality, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, is 4-year colleges are now a dream, 5 years is the norm, and 6 years is not uncommon, yet we don't talk about the cost it takes to do that. Again, we don't talk about the likelihood of completing even if you attend 6 years. The reality is we have to fix that.

In my 35 years of dealing with the system, what became clear to me is it is outdated, it is burdensome, it is unhelpful, and it conflicts. It led me to start working on the College Transparency Act as soon as I came to Congress. It was the first bill that I dropped and submitted in Congress. It is the one I spent the most time on. Why? Because we have a huge investment in postsecondary education, and, even more importantly, we have a huge investment preparing a labor force.

I have not gone to an employer since I was sworn into office that has not said to me: We can't find people with the skills to go to work.

Yet we have people who have graduated from college who can't find jobs that relate to their degree. We have people who will go to college for an extended period of time or to a postsecondary program who don't complete, but they meander their way through. They get lost. They don't have the information to make an informed decision, and then somehow, sometimes, frankly, we blame the consumer.

It is our fault. It is our fault here. It is our fault at the Federal Government. We are making a huge investment, and we expect everybody else to cure the problem. Better information on outcomes in student success will certainly assist in closing the skills gap that we talk about nearly every day here in Congress and certainly every day in the Education and the Workforce Committee when we meet.

Senators HATCH, WARREN, CASSIDY, and WHITEHOUSE share my concern. On the Senate side, they have introduced a similar bill—almost identical—to address this critical issue. I believe on this issue we can get bipartisan support to move forward with an approach to inform the public and the consumers about the decision they will make with their money and, to be honest with you, our investment in their future.

The current system is massively broken. This chart will show the current reporting system for higher education in the United States today. If you can possibly read it from there—and we will get it submitted for the RECORD—these are all the groups that gather data, all the places it goes, and all the information that is exchanged about students going to postsecondary education in the United States.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, can you make any sense of that? I have worked 35 years in that field. I will tell you that a student enrollment for one system doesn't match the definition of enrollment in another system, it doesn't match the definition in the State system, yet we all report that information. Graduate information is all different depending on the system. None of the definitions match.

Now, if we can't get definitions to match internally in a system between State accrediting agencies and the Federal Government, how is it we expect students and how are parents to understand whether they are likely to complete the program? And, by the way, none of this information adequately reports student outcomes in terms of employment and doesn't provide them any information on what they are likely to earn. And guess what? Earnings matter in terms of their ability to pay their student loans back. News flash to everybody: it helps if they know what they are going to make.

A 2015 study completed by Boston Consulting Group indicated $11.1 billion is spent by institutions to comply with regulations specific to colleges and universities. We don't need more regulations. Good God, help us. We have plenty—we have plenty of reporting.

One of the most significant findings of the study was that small and medium colleges are disproportionately impacted by those Federal regulations with compliance eating up a much larger share of expenditures than the wealthier institutions.

While we say we need more options for continuing and postsecondary education, for career and technical education at the postsecondary level, we are killing those institutions with rules and regulations of reporting that give us that, that isn't useful to the public that has to make a decision. Imagine that.

We have an opportunity to fix that with the Higher Education Act. We have an opportunity to fix that with the College Transparency Act. We have an opportunity now.

There are three main goals of the bill. This chart will show you what the bill will collect. First and most importantly, the goal is to provide accurate and complete information that is searchable for students and can be customized. Think about it. How many people have shopped for an automobile? They have on the website a comparison of whatever vehicle to other similar vehicles sold by other manufacturers. You can compare them dealer to dealer. You can get an idea what features are there. Shop for whatever you want, and then tell me if you can find that about any educational program offered by postsecondary institutions.

This addresses that issue while reducing reporting burdens on institutions. I believe, and I think most of our party believes, that market competition works best when consumers can actually find out information and make rational decisions. They can compare complete information. They can compare the offerings, the costs, and the outcomes.

With that competition, we can, in fact, address one of the other concerns we have, which is: What is the cost of higher education? We can compare it not just on what you pay for tuition, room and board, but the return on investment. What do they get for their time and money in a postsecondary education program?

More importantly, choices will be made by consumers and not the Federal Government. We have seen how that works in so many ways, and the Federal Government should not be making choices about the future of Americans.

If we arm consumers with that information to make informed decisions, then we can remove the Federal Government from the business of determining quality in education and let consumers and accrediting agencies address that.

The bill also replaces a number of reporting requirements that the Federal Government has, most notably what is called the IPED survey. I did them for years. Routinely, we get questions that don't match their definitions because their definitions made no sense for many institutions.

Thirdly, the bill aims to provide transparency to its students by requiring they be posted in a searchable database, and the costs would be identified there.

Let me go through real quickly in that chart the information that will be available that is not currently available on a searchable basis. You can get enrollment patterns, you can get progress to completion, and you can get completion rates. Do you graduate from a program? Imagine that. You can find that out, and it is the same definition whether it is the University of Michigan or Michigan State where I attended. Wouldn't that be a great idea?

You can find out about their postcollege earnings. It is really helpful. Most people go to college or a postsecondary school to find a job, earn some money, and support their family. Can they do that? What is likely to be the outcome?

The cost of the program? I mentioned that a couple of times. It is not just tuition and room and board. The reality is that, depending on the program, your costs are significantly different. My 18- almost 19-year-old stepdaughter attends an art school. Well, beyond tuition and room and board, there are huge costs for art supplies. Now, we knew that. I have experience in education. There are a lot of people who start these programs who don't understand there are other costs and what those may be. This process requires reporting of that from the colleges.

Also, information about financial aid that is available for those institutions

so they can compare program to program, institution to institution, and make a decision that is best for them and their family. That is what we are trying to achieve here. It is achievable.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GARRETT) who will speak for a few moments on the bill and its advantages.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Congressman MITCHELL, for his leadership in this amazingly important area, and also to point out the bipartisan nature of this bill not only, Mr. Speaker, to you, but to those people who might be watching at home at a time when it seems that we can't agree on anything, here we have an agreement in a College Transparency Act in how to ensure a better investment for the futures of our children.

Now, there are those who have opposed this bill, and I can't really wrap my brain around it, Mr. Speaker. Someone suggested that this might grow government. But that is absolutely not true. As a matter of fact, the data that would be made available in this act is already collected. But the problem is that that data is collected, and then it is siloed and accessible only to institutions or government entities and not to the end user. That strikes me as illogical, at best, and stupid, at worst.

Someone says it burdens colleges with data collection requirements, yet, again, the data is already being collected. What about personal privacy? Does it disclose individuals' private information? Well, if it did, I wouldn't be standing here today extolling the virtues of this bill which I cosponsored and Mr. MITCHELL sponsors that support it again across the aisle to include the likes of the distinguished gentleman, Mr. POLIS, from Colorado.

Instead of disclosing personal data of individuals, it discloses metadata of groups so what we would learn, for example, is that individuals who majored in X at college Y had an employment rate of Z, and that their earning potential was A as opposed to another university where it might be B.

What more pertinent information, Mr. Speaker, could there be to young people as they seek to choose an area of study and a place to engage in that area of study than their likelihood of success based on those who have done the same thing at the same college or university before them?

So we have addressed some of the things that this bill doesn't do, but let's speak briefly about what it does do. Without any ability to articulately argue, this bill increases transparency. When you step aside from the realm of national security, I can think of no reason that the Federal or State or local government should be in the business of collecting data that they don't share with the citizens who put them in office or the people who fund their endeavors. Indeed, this isn't national security, unless you contemplate the fact that right now our children attend universities deprived of information that might help them make better choices.

So this increases transparency. It creates informed consumers. It allows individuals to decide for themselves which college or university might offer a program that they are interested in, is the best investment of their time, and perhaps their or their parents' or the government's money. It informs payers to that very end, whether that payer is the student, a family member, or the State of which they are a resident. It gives us a return on the investment.

The fact that this data has been collected low these many years, and it took the leadership of Mr. MITCHELL and good folks like JARED POLIS working across the aisle to get us to this point, is lamentable, but we have the opportunity in the College Transparency Act to correct these wrongs, not to reburden our universities with more data collection requirements, but to take the data that is already being collected and give it to the end users, the students.

So it is with that that I again offer a hearty congratulations to Congressman MITCHELL, a begrudging ''I wish I had thought of that,'' and I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that while we already collect this data, we do not disseminate it where it would be most useful, and that is to the end users. I hope that all can find a way to join us from both parties in supporting this commonsense measure, the College Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the president of the University of Virginia in my district.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Charlottesville, VA, June 1, 2017.

Hon. TOM GARRETT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GARRETT: On behalf of the University of Virginia (UVA), I thank you for your co-sponsorship of the College Transparency Act. I appreciate your support of transparency, good data, and enhanced consumer information in higher education, as well as the bipartisan efforts that led to the creation of this bill.

The College Transparency Act is a step in the right direction for improving federal data, which is currently limited, and at times, inaccurate. Improving data helps students and families with the important decisions associated with choosing a college, and also helps institutions of higher education improve student success. The Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, for which I serve as the Chair of the Council of Presidents, compiled case studies showing the importance of this type of data for improving student outcomes. I look forward to working with you, in your influential position as a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, on this issue and many others as Congress moves forward with reauthorizing the Higher Education Act.

Once again, thank you for your dedicated support of UVA.

Very truly yours,

TERESA SULLIVAN,
President.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I would note that institutions from the University of Virginia to the entire Virginia community college system have endorsed this commonsense piece of legislation. It is a shame we haven't done it sooner. Let us not miss the opportunity to pass this now.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague noting both the bipartisan nature of this legislation both in the House and the United States Senate, which, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, some days around here is hard to achieve.

Let me note real quickly we have a listing, which I will put up now, of the institutions and organizations that support the College Transparency Act. We are now at over 90 groups that have indicated their support for this legislation and the need for this legislation.

I know it is difficult to read from there, but in a moment I will talk more about some of these institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS), who is my colleague and good friend. Yes, he is from Ohio and roots for Ohio State. I went to Michigan State, but I will certainly yield to Mr. STIVERS to talk further about the College Transparency Act.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 2434, the College Transparency Act. I want to thank my good friend from Michigan, Congressman MITCHELL, for his leadership and bipartisan work on this very important bill.

This time of year, parents and students are beginning to make important decisions about higher education for the next school year.

□ 1930

Unfortunately, there is little information available about what can be expected from the large investment in a college or a university. This legislation will enable students and families to make informed choices about their education after high school.

The College Transparency Act will provide actionable, customizable information for students and families as they consider college and universities by accurately reporting on student outcomes, such as enrollment, completion, and postcollege success across colleges and majors.

Most importantly, this information will tell students how other prospective students have succeeded at an institution and help point them toward schools best suited for their unique needs and desired outcomes.

The current college reporting system is overly burdensome on institutions, yet it provides little practical information for students and families due to significant gaps in college data reporting.

Additionally, the data collected only reports graduation rates for students who begin as full-time students and finish at the same institution, leaving out successes of part-time students and

any student who transfers and completes a degree at an institution other than where they started. With more than half of bachelor's degree recipients attending more than one school and nearly two-thirds of community college students starting part-time, we have to ensure that these students count.

One example of this impact from my alma mater, The Ohio State University, is a veteran named Tami. Tami returned to school to complete her social work degree after her military service. She completed an associate of arts degree at Columbus State, a community college, and transferred and eventually graduated with a social work degree from The Ohio State University. She had a 3.9 grade point average in the classroom and excelled in her two-semester field placement at the university's Office of Military and Veterans Services.

Under this system, Tami's success story would not count toward Ohio State success. Under the new system, it will. Today, the system would not count Tami because she started at one school and transferred to another school. Under the legislation that Mr. MITCHELL is working on and that I am talking about today, Tami would count again.

We need to make people count again. Tami served our country. Tami got out of the military, came back, went to school part-time, then transferred schools, went to school full-time, and completed her practical experience. Under the current reporting system, Tami doesn't count.

Let's fix that. That is what this bill would do. Under the updated system, institutions would securely report privacy-protected student level data to the National Center for Education Statistics, or NCES. NCES would be responsible for presenting summary information on a user-friendly website for students and families, while securely storing student information.

This legislation will help countless students and families make better decisions about where to go for higher education, where they should attend.

I want to thank Congressman MITCHELL and Congressman POLIS for introducing this important, bipartisan legislation that will help so many students and families, students like Tami.

I hope we can roll up our sleeves, work together, and get this bill passed. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MITCHELL. I appreciate the gentleman's notation of the groups that support this bill. I was surprised, frankly, with the number of groups that stepped forward—as I said, over 90—to support the College Transparency Act. Some of the groups I would like to stress today include veterans groups.

The Student Veterans of America and Veterans Education Success, among others, have endorsed the bill because it helps veterans determine which institutions and programs best serve their unique needs and improve their ability to make progress in the workforce to be successful, something that, frankly, we owe them as part of their service to our country.

As Chris Cate, vice president of research at Student Veterans of America, said: ''Based on recent research, the value of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is clear, as student veterans across the country succeed at rates higher than traditional students. Yet, determining these outcomes is currently a significant effort and not easily accomplished without abundant resources. Basing policy on research and data is imperative, and it shouldn't take as much effort as it does today, as we have the answer to this challenge staring us in the face.'' It is the College Transparency Act.

We currently collect the data that people are begging to get to make informed decisions for themselves and, frankly, in this case, to assist veterans in making wise decisions on their GI bill.

Let me talk a little more about some of the groups that support the bill, and then I will yield to another colleague of mine.

Colleges, universities, and postsecondary institutions support this bill, which sometimes surprises me, given what we are trying to do, which is remake a reporting system and make transparent their performance. Think about it. They support the bill without exception. These institutions want more comprehensive information on student progress, completion, and outcomes so they can better understand and evaluate how well they are serving their students and identify areas for improvement.

Institutions also know best student-level data collection will decrease the reporting burden and the financial and human resources necessary to report and complete the requirements of the Federal Government, State government, and accrediting agencies.

Associations representing institutions serving the majority of college students support lifting the ban on connecting student-level data to help build evidence and improve the quality of the program.

As my colleague Mr. STIVERS indicated, as well as others, this information is disseminated and developed only at the metadata level. It is not like we are going to send your Social Security number out and post it on a Facebook page with your employment status; although, in your case, Mr. Speaker, everyone knows well your employment status.

According to the Michigan Association of State Universities, which serves as the coordinating board for Michigan's 15 public universities in my home State: ''The College Transparency Act of 2017 represents a much-needed modernization of the Federal Government's college reporting system for postsecondary data. The current ban on student-level data in the Higher Education Act represents a gross injustice to students and families who require and deserve more accurate data on postsecondary institutional outcomes in order to be adequately equipped to make one of the most important decision in one's life—whether and where to attend college. By providing more accurate information about institutional graduation rates, salary levels, and other employment outcomes, and additional information on how students fare at individual institutions and in academic programs, the College Transparency Act will enable the creation of an essential resource for student and consumer information.''

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Michigan Association of State Universities.

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE UNIVERSITIES,
Lansing, MI, July 10, 2017.

Re Endorsement of College Transparency Act, H.R. 2434/S. 1121.

Hon. PAUL MITCHELL,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MITCHELL: On behalf of the presidents and chancellors of the 15 public universities of Michigan and the nearly 300,000 students they collectively enroll, I write to express strong support for the College Transparency Act of 2017, H.R. 2434, which you have sponsored, and its companion bill in the Senate, S. 1121.

The College Transparency Act of 2017 represents a much needed modernization of the federal government's college reporting system for postsecondary data. The current ban on student-level data in the Higher Education Act represents a gross injustice to students and families who require and deserve more accurate data on postsecondary institutional outcomes in order to be adequately equipped to make one of the most important decision in one's life—whether and where to attend college. By providing more accurate information about institutional graduation rates, salary levels and other employment outcomes, and additional information on how students fare at individual institutions and in academic programs, the College Transparency Act will enable the creation of an essential resource for student and consumer information.

Introduced in both Congressional chambers, this bipartisan legislation will also serve as an indispensable tool in helping institutions assess and enhance their academic programs. Michigan public universities rely heavily on data to inform institutional policy and to better serve our students.

We commend your leadership and those cosponsoring the College Transparency Act and offer our support in advocating passage of the legislation. America's students, families, taxpayers and postsecondary institutions will all benefit greatly from its enactment.

Sincerely,

DANIEL J. HURLEY,
Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. MITCHELL. For similar reasons, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, the Dallas County Community College District, State University of New York system, University of Virginia, Virginia Community College System, Ohio State University, Louisiana State

University, St. Clair County Community College, and many others support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER) to talk further about his views on the College Transparency Act.

Mr. SMUCKER. I thank my friend from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) for hosting this Special Order on the College Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on the floor a number of times about the House's work to improve education in the country. I have been proud to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the Education and the Workforce Committee to improve career and technical education, and I have also spoken about my own experience with higher education as a nontraditional student taking classes at night while I ran a construction company during the day.

Tonight, I am happy to be here to talk about ensuring that students, parents, guidance counselors, and legislators like us have access to information that can help students make informed decisions about what college to attend so that policymakers have access to research and data that will better inform our work on higher education policy.

Today, colleges and universities report data to the U.S. Department of Education that has been collected by a voluntary survey available only to a limited group of graduates. The survey is not offered to any student who is attending college part-time, who is not seeking a degree, who has transferred from another college, or who doesn't have Federal loans.

In today's economy, we are trying to make higher education more available and accessible to nontraditional students, yet we omit a large group of nontraditional students from this data. That is just one of the reasons why we need to pass the College Transparency Act.

This bipartisan legislation seeks to modernize higher education reporting so that students and families can make responsible choices about what college or university to attend. It will help empower students and families to determine how much they need to take out in student loans and which programs at different schools provide the best paths toward their dream job or a career.

Too many students today are graduating with massive amounts of debt. Too many students graduate with majors offering too few opportunities. At the very least, students need to have this data available to them to make informed decisions.

This bill, as has been pointed out by Mr. MITCHELL, is endorsed by more than 80 education and business organizations, including Advance CTE and the Association for Career and Technical Education, organizations that represent great schools like Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology in my district.

This bill has bipartisan support in our committee, in the Senate, and the House, and it is essential for transforming our higher education system to meet the needs of a 21st century economy. So, again, I am happy to rise to speak in support of this act.

I would like to thank my friend from Michigan for hosting this Special Order this evening, and I urge my colleagues to consider supporting this important piece of legislation.

Mr. MITCHELL. I thank my colleague, Mr. SMUCKER, for taking time out of his busy schedule to come here tonight to talk about the act and its importance nationally and in his district.

He made reference to something I wish to stress, Mr. Speaker, which is that, annually, at the Federal level, we spend $160 billion a year on student aid. We currently spend it into a vacuum, into a giant black hole, in which we hope we get outcomes and which students hope they get outcomes. Certainly, parents hope they get outcomes so they don't continue to live at home. We all hope that we can get success for our young people, and we don't have the information to determine that.

Let me also stress that, beyond educational groups, veterans, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Business Roundtable have both endorsed this bill as being critical to the success of our Nation going forward.

I want to stress for you and everyone in this Chamber, when you get the level of support from such a broad range of people, we have to start asking ourselves: Why have we not already moved on this? Why has it not already taken place? We need to move on this issue sooner rather than later. We can't afford not to.

Let me talk about one other group that supports this bill passionately. Students want to know which schools are best fit for their needs. Deciding where to spend their time, their precious dollars, and incur debt is critically important to them.

Surprisingly enough, these folks want to do more than go to college, meet new friends, and have a little party every now and then. The vast majority—85 percent—of college freshmen rate getting a better job as very important in their decision to go to college; yet the day-to-day need, as we have talked about repeatedly tonight, to discern which program's institutions will best address that objective is lacking.

The ability to provide that information is at our hands. We have the technology. We have the data. We just don't provide it in a usable format.

Groups that support this bill include the Big Ten Student Association, Campaign for College Opportunity, Young Invincibles, Institute for College Access and Success, the United Negro College Fund, Achieving the Dream, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Institute for Higher Education Policy, and the National Association for College Admission Counseling. They support the College Transparency Act.

I would ask: How many more groups do we need to gather before we decide to act here in Congress?

□ 1945

In the time I have left, I want to address some myths. And if my colleague, Mr. SMUCKER, who is still here, wants to weigh in on this, I invite him to join at any point in time he wants to weigh in, because we heard a number of myths put forward about the terrible things that the College Transparency Act may arise.

One that amazes me is that while the bill requires institutions collect and report tons of new information on students—well, can we bring that chart back up of what we already collect? Let's look at that gem of what we collect currently. We are doing this now. Institutions are doing this now.

So tell me, how are we going to collect tons more? In fact, every student who attends a postsecondary education institution in the United States has information reported on them now, whether they take student financial aid or not, because a 1098–T is filed by that institution with the IRS so, in fact, if they claim credit for going to school, tuition tax credit, they can claim that.

There is no information that is not currently with one agency or another. The astonishing thing is the discussion that somehow there is some secret about whether someone is attending a postsecondary institution. It is astonishing.

College universities, also, because of this reporting, hold the student-level data. They report much of it to the Department of Education, to NCES, and to the State Department of Education to accredit the agencies in a variety of formats. The number of formats, the array of those, will totally amaze you. If you would like, I can get those reports for you. You can spend the afternoon looking through the joys of reporting on educational activities in a postsecondary institution, and none of it makes any sense to anybody that isn't actually in the system, and I will admit, that data doesn't make any sense to me either.

Colleges and universities also don't know if their graduates actually get a job, unless half the students come back happily and say they went to work and how much they are making. They don't get that information. They couldn't assist the student with that information if they tried in any accurate basis other than anecdotally. So they don't try. Why would you? You wouldn't do that. You wouldn't make that mistake.

That information exists. Why? Because the IRS has a 1098–T on everyone who went to college or a postsecondary institution. That data can be matched by the Treasury Department to whether that student is employed, what they are making, and they can report that, as was noted earlier, through metadata to the Department of Education for development of reports without reporting one individual student's information.

So I am lost in understanding how it is we lose our minds around here about student information being disseminated. It exists. It can be protected.

Let me talk real briefly about another myth that exists, that somehow tracking the student data will lead to a Federal rating system, the Federal rating system of educational programs of institutions.

Well, first, the Department of Education has tried a number of rating systems over there, all with mixed success, at best, and I am trying to be polite. It is late in the evening. Let's not be too blunt. But they failed miserably in doing so. They tried to rate institutions based on cohort default rates, and those are being repealed by many as being inaccurate.

They tried to rate institutions on something called gainful employment, but they only do gainful employment for career schools, because, hey, you know, no one goes to a university for gainful employment. I assure you, my guess is the Speaker did as well, you went to the university hoping for gainful employment. I doubt there is anyone in the room who didn't go to a college or university in hopes of gainful employment.

The reality is the Department of Education, as they have implemented this, has tried to create these Federal rating systems and failed miserably. So I tell you what, we did something unique. The College Transparency Act explicitly prohibits the creation of a single database by the Department of Education and expressly prohibits using that database for a Federal rating system.

I give up. I don't want the Department of Education telling us what a good education system is because look how well they have done so far. We will let consumers decide. We will give them information so they can decide. They can make a wise decision rather than thinking that Big Brother can make that decision for them.

If the government were doing so well with it, why is it that every Member in this room has heard from their employers the terrible shortage we have of people in current technical education, of workers? If they were doing such a great job of ratings and informing people what their opportunities were, why are we currently struggling with the workforce we have?

It is a disaster. Let's stop thinking we can fix it, and let's let consumers have the information they need to fix it.

The bill enables the NCES to aggregate student information from relevant agencies with the responsibility that they had to protect that data, which they have done for years.

So now they are doing—not create some massive Federal database in which everybody's name, Social Security number, is accessible so we can determine whether or not you are a successful student. It doesn't do that, not even close to that, never has. It provides information on an accurate basis by a program institution of what your likelihood of success is.

Last but not least, I talked a little bit about it, is keeping personal information private, the fears about privacy, and that somehow we can't achieve that under the College Transparency Act.

The College Transparency Act requires that data collection should be led by the National Center for Education Statistics. I apologize. I have been using the abbreviation NCES because it has been burned into my memory over the years. It is a statistical agency with strong protocols for securing data and protecting student privacy. It has an excellent track record for doing so.

They have consulted with the private sector, pretty good folks, about how to continue to work on student privacy in that data. NCES is already required by law to develop and enforce standards to protect individual level data. As added protection, the act requires, the College Transparency Act requires, an institute utilize the latest Federal data security standards developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. We require that they implement those on an ongoing basis and they maintain those.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is not commonplace in the Federal Government at this point. We are going a step beyond what happens every day in many agencies.

Further, your personal information, Mr. SMUCKER's or anybody else's, will never be available to the Department of Education or to the public. Your employment status will never be available. What will be available is whether all of us who took a program in Michigan State University—come on up, you would love the school, some time—whether or not you graduated, you got a job, and whether you are gainfully employed and making money. Now, wouldn't that be a great idea for the money you put into a college education? All the aggregate information is available on the programs and institutions we are talking about here.

The data developed by the Treasury Department on income and employment, once it is transmitted to NCES, is literally blown up. The file no longer exists. You can't hack what isn't there.

So I would ask, at this point in time, rather than continue to extol the virtues of the College Transparency Act, I would ask all the Members to look at the act. We have a number of cosponsors at this point in time that I am very proud of. It is a bipartisan bill. I would ask them to look at the act, look at what it is achieving, and if they have questions, let's hear those questions, and let's make an effort to move this forward.

We are already well into the decisionmaking process for young people to go to a postsecondary education program next year. It is too late for them to get this information, but, you know what, we can get it the following year. And the question I would ask is: How long are we going to wait while we are spending $160 billion in direct student aid alone hoping to get an outcome when we can do better and the ability to do that is at our fingertips?

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

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CAUCUS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Climate Solutions Caucus to speak on the issue of climate change. The caucus is a bipartisan group of members committed to implementing economically viable options to reduce climate risk.

The caucus has a ''Noah's Ark'' membership rule. Members can only join in pairs, one from each party. Under the leadership of co-chairs Mr. CURBELO and Mr. DEUTCH, the caucus is helping to break the partisan gridlock on this issue and show that promoting climate solutions can be truly bipartisan.

The formation and rapid growth of the Climate Solutions Caucus represents a recognition of both the challenges and opportunities and has demonstrated that there is bipartisan will to take action.

In recognition of the fact that 60 Members of Congress have come together to fight climate change in a bipartisan fashion, I organized this time for my colleagues to join me on the floor to let the American people know what we, as their elected leaders, are doing to address climate change.

We know, from scientific evidence, that our climate is changing. The global average temperature has increased by about 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit over the last 100 years. Sea levels are rising, the ocean is becoming more acidic, precipitation patterns are changing, and heat waves are becoming more frequent and longer in duration.

Each of these changes produces a cascade of effects that impact our lives and livelihoods, including flooding, changes in crop yields, power shortages, declines in fisheries, and increases in cardiovascular disease.

Recent events in our own country, such as devastating hurricanes in the Southeast and wildfires in the West have brought this issue to the forefront of everyone's minds. Now climate

change can't be directly blamed for all these problems, but the evidence strongly suggests that it contributes to each of them, and there are things that we can do to limit its effects.

Climate change also has a significant impact on public health. A groundbreaking study published just this week in a medical journal, The Lancet, unequivocally showed that climate change is a serious public health threat. The study involved 24 institutions from around the world and included staggering statistics, such as the fact that air pollution caused 1.9 million premature deaths in Asia in 2015, and that the range of common disease-transmitting mosquitoes increased 9.5 percent since 1950.

We know that high temperatures exasperate health problems and that burning fossil fuels creates pollution that causes cardiovascular disease. The National Academies estimate that air pollution causes around $120 billion per year in health-related damages, including healthcare costs, missed days of work and school, and premature death.

We also know that changing climate has altered the range, in some cases accelerated the spread of vector-borne diseases likes Zika and the West Nile virus. Responsibly transitioning to a clean energy economy will not only reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, but it will also reduce air pollution and help all Americans breathe easier.

What I want to talk about for a few minutes, before I turn to some of my colleagues, is a very common misperception about the relationship between implementing climate solutions and growing jobs.

Some people think that this is a zero-sum game. That is, they think if you have more of one, you get less of the other. But that is simply not true.

Implementing climate solutions can grow jobs, especially new high-paying jobs. The U.S. needs to take advantage of these economic opportunities. Regardless of what we do here in the U.S., the rest of the world has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reaching the targets laid out in the Paris Agreement, as have many cities, States, and companies here at home.

To achieve that goal, significant technological development and innovation will be needed, as well as infrastructure, markets, and distribution channels to get that technology to the people and places that need it.

The national economies that produce this clean energy technology will benefit greatly. The U.S. still leads the world in technology and innovation. Countries around the world try to recreate the innovation ethos that exists in Silicon Valley and in other places across our Nation.

The United States also has the workers who are needed to build these innovations. So we have what it takes, and if we seize the opportunity to invest in clean and climate-resilient technologies, then our economy and the American people will benefit as the world adapts to climate change and America grows good-paying jobs all across our Nation.

But if we let this opportunity pass us by, then profits and jobs will instead flow to foreign countries that develop the technologies the world needs, and American cities and States will be forced to buy foreign products as they upgrade to climate-resilient infrastructure.

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That is why I will soon be introducing a bill called Challenges and Prizes for Climate Act. This bill will establish five or more prize challenges overseen by the Department of Energy to harness the ingenuity of the research community in the private sector to solve big, complex climate problems.

Challenges have been used in the past by a wide range of organizations, including the XPRIZE, who used the challenge to jump-start the commercial space transportation industry. This industry is now flourishing.

I was just recently at SpaceX in California and saw their impressive manufacturing facility they have there. The U.S. is now relying on SpaceX in order to bring supplies up to the International Space Station and their plans to soon be flying astronauts. This commercial space transportation industry began with those who reached to try to meet this challenge and get the XPRIZE.

The Federal Trade Commission also used the prize challenge to help bring a robocall blocking service to the market, something that we can all very much appreciate. That is why I am going this direction.

My bill will create challenges that fall under five themes: carbon capture and reuse, energy efficiency, energy storage, climate adaptation and resiliency, and data analytics for better climate predictions.

Using authority from the America COMPETES Act, the Department of Energy will convene working groups from across agencies, universities, nonprofits and the private sector to help plan the challenges, and even to contribute to the prizes.

The goal of the challenge is not just to reward the winner of the best solution, but also to bring visibility to the range of innovations competing for the prize and to help society envision the future. This bill will help us see what our clean energy future will look like, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin hearing from the bipartisan group of climate leaders who have joined me here on the floor this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), my Republican colleague.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. LIPINSKI, for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, serving as good stewards of our environment is something that each and every one of us are called to do no matter who we are or where we come from.

It is critical in order to preserve public health. The reality is climate change is real and humans are a contributing factor. Congress must take serious and reasonable steps to combat it.

As an Eagle Scout and a conservationist who grew up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, I have always been captivated by the natural beauty of our open spaces and wild places. We have it all in Bucks County: preserved farmland, amazing parks, expansive forests, and historic rivers. I believe that with these natural treasures comes a special responsibility to care for and protect our natural resources at the local, State, and Federal level.

Climate change and the irresponsible management of our resources put a strain on the health of our communities and our children. Clean air and clean water are essential to the health, safety, and well-being of the next generation of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, protecting our Nation's open spaces unites us as Americans. That is why I joined 16 other House Republicans on House Resolution 195 to encourage American innovation to improve environmental policy and to protect, conserve, and be good stewards of our environment.

I introduced the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act, H.R. 1889, with Congressman JARED HUFFMAN from California. This bill designates the 1.5 million-acre land of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System to protect it from damaging activities like oil and gas drilling.

I have voted to protect the methane rule for stream protections.

The Climate Solutions Caucus will continue to be the group that shows Washington how to forego the political gamesmanship and get to work on ways we can improve our environment, address the realities of climate change, and increase innovation with an eye towards sustainability.

Protecting our environment cannot be partisan, Mr. Speaker. We have to come together to get this done as Americans.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. FITZPATRICK for his leadership and jumping in, in his firm term here in the House leadership, on coming to solutions on climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY), my colleague who I have been working with for a number of years here in the House, a very dedicated Member, especially when it comes to issues of science and climate change.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LIPINSKI for his leadership on this.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about climate. We know that climate is changing, and we have seen it.

In California, we had horrific wildfires that claimed 40 lives and destroyed thousands of structures. We have seen hurricanes more frequently, more devastating, and more powerful than ever before. So the effects are there. We see it happening.

Now, the thing that we are faced with is that there is a significant section of people that deny climate change. You can sort of see why they are denying it. I mean, if something is in your interest, you are going to be able to talk yourself into just about anything.

The big benefit of denying climate change is that we can continue to use fossil fuels. If you are a company that uses fossil fuels or produces fossil fuels, yeah, this is what you want. But there are costs of denial, and the costs of denial are clear.

We are seeing weather. We just talked about that. We are seeing health effects. We have seen that both in terms of elevated temperatures, causing people to have heat problems. We are seeing disease vectors moving to the temperate zones from the Equator. We are also going to see significant infrastructure costs, like we see in Puerto Rico now. These are real costs that we are going to pay for the denial of climate change.

Now, what are the benefits of climate change?

Well, there are significant benefits, from my point of view.

First of all, we have been spending American taxpayer dollars to develop technology to fight climate change, or to reduce carbon emissions.

I will tell you a little story about my own career. I was working at a company called U.S. Wind Power. With some amount of taxpayer dollars, we developed the leading technology for wind energy. Of course, what happened was that the funding stopped, tax credits ended, and that technology that we developed with taxpayer dollars went to Europe. They built thousands of windmills in Germany, and they made a lot of money based on that technology that we developed and paid for right in the United States of America.

We also know that renewable energy production creates more jobs than fossil fuel production for the same amount of energy. We are talking about a potential to create millions of jobs in this country. Not only that, but renewable energy has a stable price market feature. Unlike fossil fuels, which have highs and lows over a 10-year cycle, fossil fuels are going to be nice and stable, will be predictable. And businesses love predictability. So I think this is also another very good argument.

Lastly, if we reduce fossil fuels and go to clean energy, we are going to have cleaner air and cleaner water, a healthier environment, and we can reach sustainability. I think the benefits are pretty clear.

So where are we now?

Well, there are still significant resources out there determined to muddy the waters and confuse people about climate change. I have three publications here I want to illustrate. One is called ''Clexit for a Brighter Future.'' Now, the point of this is that we need to exit the Paris and United States climate treaties because fossil fuels are what we need to power the future.

Another one is called ''The Mad, Mad, Mad World of Climatism.'' This one, if you look it up, is biased, and it seems to be paid for by oil interests.

The last one I want to show is a respected magazine that is called National Geographic. And the cover page shows ''The War on Science.''

So I think we have a pretty good case to make for moving forward with action on climate change.

There will be significant costs if we don't. Renewable energy is more than cost competitive these days. As I mentioned, I worked in the wind energy business. We see wind and solar being more cost competitive—more than cost competitive, really—with coal and oil for energy production.

So we have the technology, we have the means, and we have the desire to do this, yet we are still hung up here in Washington in terms of following through with government support that is needed with the right sort of policies that will encourage us to reduce fossil fuel reduction.

Now, one of the great bright spots we see—as Mr. LIPINSKI, my friend from Illinois, pointed out—is that there is a bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus that has been formed over the last two terms. In order to join, you have to have a Member of the other party. If I am a Democrat, I have a Member of the Republican Party join.

What we are doing in that caucus is creating legislation that will help reduce carbon emissions in an economic and prosperous way. I think good things have a potential to happen. I encourage the caucus to continue, and I hope it continues to grow.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MCNERNEY for all the work that he does on this issue and many other issues here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go back to the other side of the aisle. I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO).

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LIPINSKI, my friend from Illinois, for holding this Special Order this evening, to highlight the important work being done by the Climate Solutions Caucus, to develop economically viable solutions to address climate change.

Mr. Speaker, changing weather patterns and extreme weather events threaten nearly every aspect of New York State's economy, including our agricultural and outdoor recreational sectors. The recreational economy alone generates $42 billion in consumer spending each year, while supporting over 300,000 Empire State jobs. As we work to address climate change in a bipartisan manner, we must employ a variety of techniques that both mitigate impacts and support economic growth.

I am currently working with my Agriculture Committee colleagues on conservation legislation for the next farm bill that will provide important data points on conservation programs and outcomes, allowing legislators and regulators to most efficiently use taxpayer dollars to achieve real conservation results for our farms. These incentive programs support farming practices that, among other benefits, like increasing yield, lowering the amount of fertilizers that are employed, pull carbon from the air and sequester it in the soil.

In addition to sequestering carbon in the soil. We can also work to reduce emissions through greater efficiency in the transportation sector. Indeed, the transportation sector is one area where CO_2 emissions have risen in the last 20 years, unlike, for instance, the electric generation sector.

One easy fix would be to modernize the air traffic control system to fly planes on more direct satellite guided routes because direct routes save fuel. When Canada switched to a modern air traffic control system, the national fleet was able to reduce emissions in that nation by millions of tons per year.

These commonsense changes are great steps forward in combating climate change, but our work is far from over. We must address the real impacts of man-made climate change and emphasize the need to develop and create jobs with a goal of protecting our environment. It is critical that we work together to develop smart solutions that will conserve our natural resources and protect our communities and infrastructure for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be a member of the Climate Solutions Caucus, and I look forward to working with my colleagues. I, particularly, want to applaud our distinguished friend from Illinois, Mr. LIPINSKI, for organizing this Special Order tonight on a bipartisan basis so that we can address this issue and allow the folks at home and all around the United States to better understand the work that is being done here in Congress on a bipartisan basis to address climate change.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. FASO for his work, understanding that we are only going to make progress on this through bipartisan action. I am very happy to join working with him on the Climate Solutions Caucus to bring that action forward.

Mr. Speaker, my next speaker is a woman who I work with on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, who has done some fantastic work on that committee, especially when it comes to the issue of climate change and dealing with climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

□ 2015

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LIPINSKI for yielding and also for

organizing this Special Order for the Climate Solutions Caucus. I also want to thank the founders of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Congressman TED DEUTCH from Florida and Congressman CARLOS CURBELO also from Florida, where they can see at their doorstep what issues like sea level rise mean to their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to join with my colleagues from the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus this evening to highlight the importance of taking action on climate change, something that matters so much to my constituents at home in Oregon, but also to the country and to the planet.

This is an important issue that really is a moral imperative. This is about preserving our natural resources for our children, our grandchildren, and for generations to come. Addressing climate change is also vital to our Nation's economy, as we have had some discussion about that this evening, and also to national security, but, really, the health of the planet.

Now, the district I am honored to represent out in Oregon is breathtakingly beautiful, and it is really full of potential. The majestic Columbia River is the northern boundary of the district, and the rugged Pacific Ocean is on the western boundary. It has a thriving outdoor recreation economy. As my colleague from New York mentioned, that is an important sector that cares a lot about the changing climate.

I also have in my district the heart of Oregon wine country. People in my district fish. They fish in our rivers, our lakes, and our ocean. They hike in our forests. They ski in our back country and on our mountains. We rely on those natural resources in our backyard to support a significant part of our economy, but we are very vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

My constituents are already experiencing challenges: Our wine and agricultural industries are concerned about drought as global temperatures continue to rise. Coastal communities are worried about the vitality of the commercial fishing and shellfish industries as high levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere change ocean chemistry.

I was really thrilled that we had an Oregonian from Oregon State University come to the Climate Solutions Caucus and talk about adapting to ocean acidification.

Our region has faced higher spring and summer temperatures and earlier snowmelt, and, as a result, a snowboard shop in my district is now selling more skateboards and fewer snowboards.

Climate change is not a partisan issue. Nationwide, fishers, farmers, small-business owners, and our servicemen and -women are changing the way they do their jobs because of climate change, regardless of political affiliation.

The economic, health, and environmental consequences of climate change are well known, and our understanding about how to address climate change continues to improve.

People in the United States and around the world are facing threats from rising sea levels, from ocean acidification, from more frequent and severe weather events from record droughts and flooding and rising global temperatures. We can no longer sit back and debate whether we should take action. The time is now. It is critical that we support scientific research about the climate and that we build on, rather than break down, decades' worth of progress on this issue.

Now, one important area of research is the connection between extreme weather events and climate change. Although it is not possible to say that climate change causes one particular extreme weather event, it is critical that we know more about climate change and how it increases the frequency and the severity of these events. Learning more about this correlation can help families, communities, and businesses make informed choices and adopt climate strategies.

Now, this year has seen poignant example after example with so many devastating extreme weather events. We need to do everything we can to make sure our communities are prepared to keep families safe.

We have had wildfires in the Western United States for a long time, but since the mid-1980s, they have been increasing in frequency and in duration, threatening lives, threatening public health and property. It has been unusually hot and very dry in the Northwest.

Fires and severe smoke create dangerous conditions for all populations. In Portland, Oregon, on Labor Day, the sky was gray, full of smoke from wildfire. This is especially problematic for pregnant women, for seniors, for children, for anyone with chronic health conditions like asthma. Residents and communities miles away from the wildfires saw ash falling on their homes, their cars, and throughout their neighborhoods.

This year's hurricanes have devastated communities, of course, across Texas, across the Southeast, and in the U.S. islands. About 70 percent of our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico are still without power.

These storms are increasing in frequency and severity, and lives are being lost every year.

Mr. Speaker, it is so important that we take action, and that is why I am so pleased to be here today to help highlight the importance of this issue.

As Representative LIPINSKI noted and others have, Mr. MCNERNEY and others, we can take action to address climate change and grow the economy. It is not an excuse to say this will be bad for the economy, because we can grow those renewable energy industries. There is so much potential in wind power, wave energy, solar energy. Those are good, high-paying, family-wage jobs. We can grow those economies and address climate change at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, addressing climate change is going to save lives; it is going to save property. I am so pleased to be part of this bipartisan group that is working together in equal number of Democrats and Republicans to call attention to this important issue, and I will continue to work with the caucus to emphasize the importance of congressional action.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus for their dedication to this effort. I know it is quite a relief to my constituents back home in Oregon to know that there are bipartisan Members who are committed to addressing this critical issue.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their dedication to this effort. I look forward to the progress that we will make together on behalf of our constituents, our communities, our country, and our planet.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. BONAMICI for speaking tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman who really deserves a tremendous amount of credit for all of us being here tonight. He is the co-chair of the Climate Solutions Caucus, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH).

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. LIPINSKI, for yielding and for his thoughtful and passionate leadership in combating climate change, and thanks to the strong bipartisan cross section of Members who have come to the floor tonight to talk about the importance of tackling climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues, all of them, to join the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus. I started this caucus with my fellow Floridian, Congressman CARLOS CURBELO, to start a new dialogue around climate and Congress because we are already facing difficult challenges. We can't ignore it. We can't bury it in political fights. We need to have an open discussion not only for our future, but for the impact of climate change that we are facing today.

It is no coincidence that this project started with two Members from south Florida. A 2015 study projected that some south Florida cities could be underwater within this century. The study's author said some cities appear already to be lost.

Climate change is already here for Floridians. The effects have hit Florida first.

Scientists have warned of warming average global temperatures and the changing climate for decades. Dr. Andrew Clarke of the British Antarctic Survey has spent 40 years at the bottom of the planet watching it disappear. Dr. Clarke said: ''You can see the entire environment changing in front of your eyes.''

We now have climate change right before our eyes in south Florida. We see the rate of sea level rise outpace the global rate tenfold. We see the high-water mark jump 1 inch every

year. Just this week, we see the tides flooding our neighborhoods.

The limestone that serves as the foundation of our State is porous. Saltwater pushes up through the limestone from below the surface.

Lower bridge heights will block boats from reaching open waters. With 165 miles of canals, Fort Lauderdale faces significant threats of rising seas. Who in south Florida hasn't driven around their neighborhood and noticed more puddles, more water accumulating on the sidewalks and streets?

While many Americans might be able to ignore climate change, ignore the science, based on their own personal experience and your own personal experience at home, we can't. Looking out our windows, we see what is already there.

By the year 2100, almost 300 U.S. cities would lose at least half of their homes, and 36 American cities could be completely destroyed. One in eight Florida homes could be underwater. Those Florida homes represent half of the total expected loss in housing value caused by climate change over the next 84 years. These aren't risks of a distant future. These are the burdens we are placing on our children and on our grandchildren.

In response, and through the work of the South Florida Climate Compact, Miami Beach has initiated a sea level rise plan to lift roads, build up seawalls, and install pumps to clear water in the streets. Fort Lauderdale is fixing roads and drains and sending vacuum trucks into the streets to prevent saltwater damage, upgrading building codes and flood elevation requirements, and requiring higher seawalls.

In Florida, you can't put climate change out of sight or out of mind, but it is not just hitting Florida and it is not just the sea level rise or increasing temperatures.

The National Climate Assessment has documented regional climate impacts hitting every area of the United States:

In the Northeast and Midwest, dramatic increases in heavy precipitation events overwhelm drains and levies, causing flooding and accelerating erosion;

In the Great Plains and Southwest, drought and wildfires strain demands for scarce water resources;

In Alaska, receding sea ice and melting glaciers are damaging infrastructure;

On the coasts, increases in carbon dioxide and warming seas lead to coral bleaching and ocean acidification that is taking its toll on fisheries and the ecosystems.

The diverse and interconnected impacts that we already see throughout our country explain why we already have 60 Members who belong to this new dialogue, the Climate Solutions Caucus, 30 Democrats and 30 Republicans committed to changing the conversation and pushing solutions that will create more resilient communities.

We are committed to understanding the impacts of climate change, the impact on our national security; to investing in clean, innovative energy protection; to protecting our public health; and to overcoming the political obstacles that hold up public policy solutions.

It is time for Congress to come together and admit the challenges that our constituents are already facing at home. It is time to build consensus.

Through the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, we have brought together Members from regions in every part of the country who are experiencing their own climate change challenges. I invite every Member of the House of Representatives to join us. Lift up the voices of your constituents, your farmers, your city officials, your developers, doctors, scientists, and, most importantly, the families whom you represent.

If you are watching at home, call your Member of Congress and urge them to join the Climate Solutions Caucus and help us start the difficult work of building truly bipartisan consensus that will help us tackle climate change together and help us create resilient American communities of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, Mr. LIPINSKI, again for organizing tonight's discussion.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. DEUTCH for his leadership of the Climate Solutions Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUDD). The gentleman from Illinois has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI).

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleague, Mr. LIPINSKI, for pulling this effort together this evening.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is real, and I applaud my colleagues on the Climate Solutions Caucus for working together in a bipartisan effort to try and find common ground and to seek to work together to pass legislation to address this very real threat.

I believe the greatest opportunity we have here is to include efforts to move our Nation toward a greener economy as part of a comprehensive infrastructure bill.

We must address climate change for three reasons: first, the Earth is part of the divine creation, and we have an obligation to preserve and protect our precious gift; second, moving toward a green economy that retrofits homes and buildings and installs solar and wind farms will create good jobs at good wages that simply cannot be exported; and, third, the main topic I wish to address this evening, is moving toward a green economy, reducing our dependency on foreign oil, and addressing climate change is essential to our national security.

□ 2030

Americans rarely talk about it and sometimes forget, but we supported Osama bin Laden against the Russians in Afghanistan. We supported Saddam Hussein in Iraq after we lost the Shah after the Iranian Revolution. We supported the Assads in Syria. And we still maintain a close relationship with the Saudis, despite their support for Wahhabism. Why? Because our national economic strategy and security has relied for decades on access to foreign oil.

Our meddling in local affairs to ensure the oil spigot flowed freely has sowed distrust across generations throughout the Middle East.

By moving towards a green economy and eliminating our dependence on foreign oil, we can clearly say to the Middle East: We never wanted your land, we never wanted your money, and now we don't need your oil. All we want is for people of the region to stop trying to kill each other. It will take some time, but moving towards an economy independent of foreign oil is the best way to get there.

In addition to eliminating our dependence on foreign oil, we must try to stall the rapid rise in extreme weather events, droughts, and desertification that is destabilizing huge swaths of the Middle East and Africa. The number of refugees in the world has grown from 35 million only 10 years ago to 65 million today. War and violence are exacerbated by the instability caused by climate change.

One of the most violent regions in the world today is Syria. The instability in Syria began with droughts that destroyed the livelihoods of the Syrian people that rely upon an economy which is 85 percent agrarian. When people lost their farms, they fled to the cities looking for work, but, of course, they could not find it. Then they looked to the Assad government, but, of course, were ignored. Fomented by the Arab Spring, they began to revolt. The result? The Syrian Government has killed almost a half million of its own people and millions more refugees. This story is being repeated throughout the region.

Although the people suffering are thousands of miles away from the United States, our national security is threatened by these failing states. The rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq is a prime example of the impact of failed states on Western security. Mass migrations by those seeking to alleviate suffering, millions seeking political and economic reforms place pressure on corrupt and incompetent governments that are unable to respond to the needs of a population seeking opportunity and hope.

Our enemies who wish to foment instability—Russia, Iran, North Korea, and violent terrorist factions—are aided by the effects of climate change and the instability it causes. We must do everything we can to stall the growth of this nefarious trend.

The good news is that there is a growing bipartisan consensus in the Climate Solutions Caucus and the armed services community that we must act. The Armed Services Committee in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act acknowledged that ''climate change is a direct threat to the national security of the United States,'' and that ''the Department of Defense must ensure that it is prepared to conduct operations both today and in the future, and that it is prepared to address the effects of changing climate on threat assessments, resources, and readiness.''

Secretary of Defense Mattis has said, ''Climate change can be a driver of instability, and the Department of Defense must pay attention to the potential adverse impacts generated by this phenomenon.''

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford has said that climate change and rising sea levels pose serious long-term threats to the country. The number of natural disasters will increase in the coming years, along with ''the requirement for humanitarian assistance'' and the response required for the military for civilian disasters.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank again my colleagues for the work that they have done to try and bring the issue of climate change to the American people, and to try and find solutions to this very real problem that is not only affecting us here at home, but our national security throughout the world.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for all of his work on this and other issues.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CARBAJAL), my colleague.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LIPINSKI for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, we are out of time to debate the reality of climate change. Its effects are already here. Recently, each year has brought with it record-breaking droughts, hurricanes, and natural disasters.

My home State of California just experienced our deadliest wildfire season yet. This year alone, natural disasters will cost more than $22 billion in recovery efforts. That is why I am proud to work with my colleague and cofounder of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Mr. CURBELO, to introduce the bipartisan Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act, H.R. 3533, which will help coastal States better plan for extreme weather events and implement climate change adaptation strategies.

We can save lives, homes, and billions of tax dollars by encouraging these vulnerable communities to prepare their infrastructure for the impacts of climate change.

After severe weather events like Hurricanes Maria and Harvey, it is imperative that we invest in readying our infrastructure for the next extreme weather event. Moreover, we also need to invest in developing renewable energy sources.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House to join me and Mr. CURBELO in this effort.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CARBAJAL for his work. That was a great lead-in to our next speaker. We just had, a couple of speakers ago, the Democratic co-chair of the Climate Solutions Caucus. Our next speaker is the Republican co-chair. I give him a lot of credit and I thank him for the work that he has done in putting this caucus together.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO).

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to my colleague from Illinois for leading this special discussion tonight. I am grateful to have the opportunity to come here for a few minutes. And more than anything, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, who have stepped up and said: Enough of the demagoguery, enough of the fact-less conversation. Let's focus on what is happening in the world, on how human beings are contributing to it, and let's try to make the situation better.

I oftentimes say that, on this climate issue, neither the deniers nor the alarmists have much to offer. It is the men and women who are willing to sit at the table and have a sober conversation that can really help solve this problem. There are a lot of people who are counting on us to solve this problem.

Sea level rise is a reality. It is happening all over the world. Mr. Speaker, you might understand why this might be important to me. I represent a community where most people live near sea level and near the sea. This is a real concern, especially in the Florida Keys, one of the most attractive and dynamic parts of the country, an area that is recovering. We hope our fellow Americans will help us continue recovering after Hurricane Irma.

The Florida Keys and most of south Florida are significantly exposed to this sea level rise challenge, and we know that human activity is at least, in part, responsible for this dynamic. The Climate Solutions Caucus is not about blaming people. It is not about pointing the finger. It is about coming up with solutions.

I think there are really three phases to our caucus and our work. The first phase was to bring Republicans and Democrats together, sit at the table, have a discussion about our different perspectives on this issue, invite in some key witnesses to help inform us. We have done that. We have done a good job. Caucus members have a very good relationship, a good rapport.

The next phase has been to block anti-climate legislation. We have done that successfully here with some appropriations amendment where the caucus has come together and said: No. We are not going to prohibit the Defense Department from assessing the risks associated with climate change.

Again, this is critical in my district. I happen to represent Naval Air Station Key West, where the men and women of the Navy work hard to train and prepare to defend our country overseas. That is a facility that is exposed to this threat.

We came together and we defeated an amendment that would have prohibited the Defense Department from assessing these risks.

I am really excited for the next phase of the caucus, which I hope we can reach during this Congress, which is to find legislation that we can all get behind and say that these are reasonable solutions that not only help the environment and help guarantee that we are going to hand off to our children and grandchildren the same beautiful Earth that we inherited, but also that we are going to provide opportunities for American innovation and growth, and new good jobs, high-paying jobs, for young men and women from all over this country. That is going to be very exciting, and we are all working together to get to that day where we can promote an agenda in this Congress that will bring Republicans and Democrats together behind a pro-environment, pro-growth policy that will save this planet and keep our country on the cutting edge of innovation, leading the world.

This is a not an issue that we should shy away from. We should rise to this occasion. This is the country that has led the entire world through a host of different challenges over the last couple centuries. We can also do it on this climate issue, but I think we can only do it if we do it together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues, but especially my Democratic colleagues tonight who have led this Special Order, organized this Special Order. I think we all would like to invite our colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join the caucus, especially on my side. We are up to 30 Republicans, 30 Democrats. That is very exciting. When I arrived here a couple years ago, I probably had only two or three Republican colleagues who were even willing to discuss this issue, and now there are 30 on the record. Let's keep the caucus growing, let's keep it strong, let's work together, and let's change the world for the better.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CURBELO for his leadership and for pointing out some of the victories that we already have had here on this House floor, the Climate Solutions Caucus. That is just the beginning. There will be plenty more to come as we grow this caucus and do the work that we are here to do.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA), a freshman Member who is already making a big splash here getting a lot done in Washington, working especially on a bipartisan basis on a lot of these issues, getting some good things done.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. LIPINSKI's kind words, but I

think he and I know best that we had good teachers to help us understand what it takes to get things done here in the United States Congress, and, most importantly, that is the ability to work together.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today with all of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, who are on the Climate Solutions Caucus. As you have heard tonight, and as we know, the Climate Solutions Caucus is a bipartisan caucus that gives Democrats and Republicans the opportunity to sit down and to discuss ways not only to protect our environment, but to protect our homes, our Nation's economy, and our Nation's security.

Yes, this caucus consists of people from separate political parties, but all of us are united in our belief that we must have this dialogue to defend our future.

Being from the central coast of California, where we have over 120 miles of stunning coastline in my district, we understand the vulnerability that comes with rising sea levels, something that can impact our economy, our security, and, of course, our daily lives.

The co-chairs of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Florida Representatives CARLOS CURBELO and TED DEUTCH, they understand and they appreciate that threat, for earlier this year Florida was pummeled by Hurricane Irma and the subsequent severe flooding, a storm that affected the lives of millions of Americans and cost billions in recovery and cleanup efforts.

We have seen that at times of crisis like that, despite the damage and despite our differences, our government and even this Congress can come together and put back together those communities. That is our government during an emergency, and at times where there are storms, where there is damage, we are motivated to come together and govern.

This year, my district saw this type of governing due to damage it suffered during the major winter storms earlier in 2017.

□ 2045

Every county in my district saw devastation. One county in particular, Monterey County, suffered an extreme amount of damage—the town of Big Sur, along the coast of California, in particular. The northern route of Highway 1, going into Big Sur, suffered a knockout of a major bridge. The southern route had a major landslide, leaving that community isolated.

But I can tell you, 2 weeks ago, I stood on the brand-new bridge that was built. And as I was standing there, to me, it was a story of the people of Big Sur, very resilient, always coming back from these types of situations. But it was also the story of government working, people and government coming together, getting things done to help people.

Now, just prior to that, I had read a New York Times editorial, where the title of that editorial was, ''We Used to Build Things.'' And it was by David Brooks, and he talked about this big fire called the Big Burn, back in the early 1900s, that started in Washington and Oregon and spread throughout the upper West, all the way into Montana. And from that devastating fire arose something, and that was the U.S. Forest Service.

When I read that article, it reminded me that, throughout the history of this Nation, we have always built things to help people. We have engineered infrastructure to energize our economy, and we have expanded agencies to embolden and to empower our communities and the people who live there.

So now, after the storms on the West Coast, after the flooding in the Midwest, and after the hurricanes on the East Coast, it is our turn. It is time for this generation, our generation, to build things in a smart and resilient fashion, so that future generations are secure and safe in their homes and in their communities. And we need to start by focusing on and building infrastructure that is strong and stable to sustain the inevitable intense storms of the future.

Now, we know, and what has been confirmed by the nonpartisan Federal Government Accountability Office, that extreme weather events are already costing U.S. taxpayers billions and billions of dollars each year. According to that GAO report, the Federal Government spent more than $350 billion over the last decade on losses to private property and disaster assistance programs from natural disasters.

Now, that amount doesn't even include the massive price tag on the recovery effort from this year's hurricanes and fires that are expected to be amongst the costliest in our Nation's history. And we know that it is going to get worse as storms are more intense, and recovery efforts are going to cost more. So we need to recognize and we need to realize the need for smart rebuilding.

Now, after the 2012 hurricane up in New York, Hurricane Sandy, there was a Rebuilding Task Force that was put together, and it recommended that Federal flood protection measures should entail that projects receiving Federal dollars, they should comply with elevation and flood-proofing measures to avoid rebuilding them after future storms. The report wanted to ensure that we do not need to pay multiple times to repair for flooding damages in flood-impacted areas.

In 2015, the administration put forward the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard. That was a standard that set out that federally financed infrastructure projects must be built to withstand future storms and flooding. That standard was meant to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and communities are protected.

However, in August, this administration decided to roll back the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, a decision that was compounded by its poor timing, as it was announced 2 weeks before the hurricanes that ripped apart Houston, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

So last month, Congressman CURBELO and I introduced the Federal Infrastructure Flood Resiliency Act, a bipartisan bill that ensures that Federal agencies complete implementation of a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard; such a standard that will not just benefit our coastal communities, it will help our government, and it will help our country, because we know that every dollar that is invested in flood mitigation efforts results in $4 in saved flood recovery costs. This is something that Republicans and Democrats understand.

After Hurricane Harvey, the Governor of Texas, Mr. Abbott, stated: ''As we go through the build-out phase, and rebuilding Texas, part of our focus must be on rebuilding in a way that will prevent a disaster like this from happening again.''

Mr. Speaker, by investing in more resilient project designs, our communities will be able to recover quickly, and they will be protected against any future flooding. Taking these prudent steps will save taxpayer dollars and prevent future loss of life and property. It is a commonsense step that we can take toward responsible, bipartisanship governing; and it is this type of governing that needs to happen all the time.

Now, when I stood on that bridge, and I was there celebrating the reopening of that bridge, the reopening to Big Sur, I also thought that this was government at its best, where the government came together, it responded, it reacted in record fashion, and it reconstructed a major bridge.

So yes, it made me proud, but it also made me realize that we need to stop just governing by crisis. We need to start governing with leadership. We need to come together to get things done, not just in emergency situations, not just for natural disasters of today, but we need to start governing for tomorrow.

The Climate Solutions Caucus understands and believes that we, in Congress, need to lead. We need to do that by coming together. We do that by talking about the effects of climate change. We do that with Flood Risk Management Standard legislation, and we don't necessarily do it for us. We do it for our children.

That is leadership, and that is why I am proud to be on the Climate Solutions Caucus.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I just want to thank all my colleagues for their leadership on this issue. The time to take action on climate is now. We can't leave this problem to future generations to solve for us. As we heard this evening, there is no shortage of good ideas for how to do so.

I want to close by reading the mission statement of the Climate Solutions Caucus, which reminds us of the many reasons why our bipartisan group has come together to take action:

''The members of the Climate Solutions Caucus acknowledge the fact that, if left unaddressed, the consequences of a changing climate have the potential to adversely affect the health of all Americans and the strength of our economy, consequently imposing substantial costs on both State and Federal budgets.

''By seeking to reduce climate risk, we will, in turn, ensure the protection of our economy, infrastructure, and public safety, all while attaining energy independence from the world's most volatile regions. Therefore, it is our goal to take a market-based approach to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the United States in order to leave a better planet and stronger economy for future generations.''

Mr. Speaker, this is something that all Americans can endorse and support. It is a better world and a better country.

So I thank, again, all my colleagues for joining me here tonight, and for their work, all of the 60 members—30 Democrats, 30 Republicans—for their work on the Climate Solutions Caucus.

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

ADVOCATING FOR PATIENTS' RIGHT TO TRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I am here this evening, along with my friend and colleague, Representative BRIAN FITZPATRICK, as we advocate for the passage of the Right to Try Act. This bill, which we introduced together, has dozens of bipartisan cosponsors, including Members here tonight.

We are both supportive of Senator RON JOHNSON's efforts to champion Right to Try in the Senate. He has been a tireless advocate of Right to Try for years, and his bill has already passed the Senate with unanimous consent. If you are watching the Senate very closely, you will know that nothing comes out of there, and certainly nothing with unanimous consent; so that tells how strong the sentiment is in favor of this bill.

Our legislation allows terminally ill patients who have no further options left—I repeat that, no further options left—the opportunity to try experimental drugs that could save their own lives.

Yes, there are also provisions in our bill to protect both the patients, as well as the pharmaceutical companies who want to participate, but those provisions are secondary to the primary purpose of this legislation. The primary purpose of the Right to Try Act is to give brave patients across this country some choice over their own destinies, when all other avenues are gone.

We want to give hope to these Americans, and we should all share that same goal of doing everything we can for patients fighting to save their lives. This policy has significant bipartisan support. The Trump administration strongly supports Right to Try, and President Trump has indicated he would likely sign this bill into law.

Time is of the essence, for time is one thing a terminally ill patient does not have. And the status quo is not the answer. The FDA and other agency officials claim that their own expanded access program is working and continues to improve. There may be some truth to that, but the program is simply not enough; and I know that because I have talked to dozens and dozens of patients, family members, and advocates who tell me it is not enough. They come to my office, they call me on the phone, they write me impassioned letters.

These same advocates have ensured that Right to Try has become law in 38 States. Think about that for a moment. With one more State, you could actually ratify a Constitutional amendment. And in half of those 38 States, Right to Try laws passed with unanimous support. In my home State of Arizona, voters approved that initiative by 80 percent of the popular vote.

At a time when pundits are claiming that our politics are broken, and Republicans and Democrats can't come together on anything, here is a cause that Americans of all political stripes can unite in.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, ANDY BIGGS, for him joining all of us in this fight to stand up for terminally ill patients across this country.

Mr. Speaker, each year, more Americans receive the devastating news of a terminal diagnosis. Even with the amazing work done in American medical research and development, for too many families, access to these potentially lifesaving treatments will come too late or not at all.

Thousands of terminally ill patients, like my constituent, Matt Bellina, suffer needlessly while awaiting final approval for drug therapies and other medical technologies.

In April 2014, at age 30, Matt was diagnosed with ALS, otherwise known as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS attacks nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, causing those with ALS to lose control of their muscles.

Although this disease stopped Matt's career as a U.S. Navy aviator in its tracks, he persisted and actively involved himself in the ALS community as a strong advocate for Right to Try legislation.

While the Food and Drug Administration carries out its three-phase approval process, which can take years and cost billions of dollars, many patients simply want the chance to try treatments that have already been demonstrated to be safe.

A bill that was unanimously passed by the Senate will offer them a chance to extend their lives. The Right to Try Act, S. 204, would ensure that terminally ill patients, together with their physicians and pharmaceutical manufacturers, can administer investigational treatments where no alternative exists. In fact, this bipartisan idea is already the law in 37 States.

A Federal Right to Try law would prevent the government from blocking access to potentially lifesaving medications. It would require patients to first try all other available treatments and be unable to participate in clinical trials.

I want to note that these provisions only apply to terminally ill patients. It does not undo the FDA approval process but provides a potential lifeline for those who cannot wait. Moreover, it requires a physician to certify that other options are either exhausted or unavailable.

This bill requires that a product meet a demonstrated level of safety by attaining FDA phase I approval. We have worked with the drug companies to ensure adverse outcomes are not used against the ongoing application for approval. Additionally, patients, doctors, and manufacturers do not assume any additional liability under this act.

For those patients caught in between the traditional drug approval delays, a clinical trial process for which they do not qualify, and limited time, the Right to Try simply establishes the freedom for patients and their doctors to try therapies where the benefits far outweigh the risks. It gives them the option of trying to save their life.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is a father like Matt courageously battling ALS, or a brave child living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, they deserve the right to try.

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Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. FITZPATRICK; I appreciate all that he has done and continues to do in this cause, this important cause. He is a great leader in this, and I am grateful for all of his effort here.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ).

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for

his leadership on this issue on behalf of the terminally ill. I would also like to thank Senator JOHNSON for marshaling together the resources of the Senate to bring this legislation to a head.

I ran for public office because I was tired of the government playing too large a role in the decisions people make in their private lives, in their homes, and in their businesses. We live in a world today where the government wants to tell you where you have got to send your kids to school, what kind of healthcare plan you have got to buy, what regulations you have to comply with, and how much money they are going to take out of your paycheck each and every month.

I certainly don't think the government ought to play a role in deciding how someone deals with treatment at the end of life. That is why I am a proud cosponsor of the Right to Try Act with Representative BIGGS, Representative FITZPATRICK, and so many others. My frustration lies with any regime, regulatory or otherwise, that would impair a patient's decision to use any medication to be able to alleviate their symptoms or improve their quality of life in their final days.

It is absolutely ludicrous to me that, in today's world, we don't allow terminally ill people in every corner of this great country to be able to use medical cannabis to alleviate their pain and suffering, particularly at the end of life.

It is so frustrating to me that the Federal Government has lied to this country for a generation about medical cannabis, saying that it has no medical value. Well, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely not true. I have met with patients in my district who have received terminal diagnoses, who have been told by their doctors not to buy green bananas, and yet those folks courageously move forward trying to be a part of their own treatment and to be a part of their own clinical plan moving forward.

Too often, doctors, whether it is at the VA or in private practice, aren't able to counsel their patients and give them advice and comfort that there is a substance in medical cannabis which has proven in some circumstances to have medical value.

Stage IV of terminal cancer includes symptoms like loss of appetite, which can be helped by cannabis, chronic pain, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chemotherapy-induced nausea. All of these things can be helped by medical cannabis.

Those who are in stage III of AIDS have sleeplessness and weight loss that can be helped by medical cannabis.

Cannabis has shown great promise in the treatment of Alzheimer's, Crohn's Disease, multiple sclerosis, and epilepsy, where there are refractory seizures, at times, 30 or 40 seizures a day.

Mr. Speaker, in this great country, we will have people who will receive terminal diagnoses each and every day. I say let's get the government out of their way. Let's let the decisions that impact the healthcare of patients be made by those patients and their family members and their doctors, not a bunch of politicians and bureaucrats in Washington.

As people fall ill, it is my position that this Right to Try Act can help them, and certainly the inclusion of medical cannabis into this legislation would make it a great deal more useful and a great deal better for those in pain.

I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for his impassioned speech, his position, his comments regarding the bill, and his desire to see it altered, but I do appreciate his support of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I am certainly grateful to have this opportunity to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER).

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) for hosting tonight's Special Order. I also thank Mr. FITZPATRICK, as well, for his leadership in this bill. I am really glad to be part of this effort.

We could stand here tonight and talk about the FDA's process for approving drugs. We could talk about the countless patients across the country who struggle to get accepted into a clinical trial for a drug that could save their life. We could even stand up here tonight and share with you one of the uplifting stories of a patient who received a lifesaving drug because of a State's right-to-try law. But we have heard this, and we know all of this.

We know the FDA's approval process takes years. We know there are too few spots in clinical trials for patients in dire need of help. We know that right-to-try laws give families hope and can save lives. What I would like to talk about tonight is the moral imperative we face on this right-to-try legislation.

America is home to the world's greatest doctors and medical experts. It is home to the world's greatest medical schools and hospitals. We have cured diseases that were once a death sentence. We have directed our national resources to fight epidemics that have saved lives here at home and overseas. We don't give up.

What we do here in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, speaks volumes. What we do here shows the Nation and the world where our priorities are.

Is our priority the bureaucracy of this city that too often misses opportunities simply because of its inability to act, or is our priority the patients and families whom we represent to consult with a doctor and decide for themselves how they choose to fight against illnesses for which we continue to search for a cure?

For me, the choice is clear, Mr. Speaker. I choose my constituents. I choose life, and I urge every single Member of this body to do the same. We cannot afford the cost of inaction.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. SMUCKER; I appreciate his comments and his willingness to participate this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Arizona for yielding.

What a great issue. As a conservative, I am an outspoken defender of one's right to life. But being pro-life doesn't mean that I am just anti-abortion. It also means that I support the right to try, because life at all stages is worth fighting for.

Every year, over 1 million Americans die from terminal illnesses, many of whom pass away while waiting for the FDA to approve a drug that could dramatically change their prognosis, while others die in the hopeless cycle of trying and trying again to gain acceptance into a medical trial.

Think about that: we are losing millions of Americans at the hands of government red tape.

Now, as a healthcare provider for 25 years, I know firsthand how important innovation is to the medical community. The Right to Try Act, if made into law, will give hope to the child with leukemia whose doctors have exhausted all other treatment options. It opens previously locked doors by allowing healthcare providers to try experimental drugs as a last-ditch effort for survival.

The experiments that the Right to Try Act will allow for have the potential to lead to many more birthdays, more piano recitals, and more camping trips, and offer hope for our future, hope for years to come.

But don't take my word for it. Emily Whitehead was merely 5 years old when she was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and her doctors quickly realized that she was among a small percentage of patients whose disease was seemingly untouchable by chemotherapy. The Whiteheads were at the end of their rope. The little girl's body was resisting chemotherapy, and the window for many more birthdays, more piano recitals, and more camping trips was wearing thin. Their only option was to join a clinical trial that experimented with T-cell therapy, where Emily could be the first pediatric patient to undergo this treatment.

And do you know what? It worked. Three years later, a groundbreaking study was conducted where 63 patients received T-cell therapy for 1 year, and 52 of them became cancer free, an absolutely unheard-of statistic with this deadly strain of leukemia.

Think about that: 52 lives were saved; 52 families were given another birthday, another piano recital, and another camping trip. What a waste it would have been had they not had the right to try.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues who have joined us tonight to champion the cause and inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to mention how I came to really be converted to the cause of right to try.

I served in the Arizona State Legislature with Laura Knaperek, who was also serving in the legislature when I first met her. By 2014, she was no longer serving in the State legislature. She was an advocate. That year, Laura was in the fight of her life against ovarian cancer, and her mission was to see right-to-try legislation passed into law.

In the end, her efforts for this cause succeeded beyond everyone's wildest expectations when 80 percent of the electorate in Arizona voted to enact right to try. But, unfortunately, Laura is not with us because she lost her brave battle with cancer last year. Her legacy as a tireless patient advocate lives on.

I will continue to carry on the fight not just for Laura Knaperek, but for all those patients across this country who are battling against the odds every day.

I am joined by those who are here tonight, those who have cosponsored this bill, and many other advocacy groups, such as the Goldwater Institute in Arizona that continues to fight for this.

I fight for Bertrand Might. Bertrand is a very special little boy. He was the first person ever to be diagnosed with a rare, fatal genetic disorder called NGLY1 that has left this 7-year-old paralyzed. Because the disease was only identified by scientists in 2012 and only a few people worldwide have been diagnosed with it, there is no cure and no treatment available. Because the disorder is so rare, a drug may never be developed to treat it.

But scientists have found that Bertrand responds to certain investigational therapies. So Bertrand's family will have to rely on trying those new investigational medications as long as they have access to them. That is why we need this right-to-try legislation.

I fight for Jordan McLinn. Seven-year-old Jordan says he wants to grow up to be a firefighter so he can save lives. He has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which could leave him paralyzed within 5 years and shortens his life expectancy to only 20 years. There is a drug now being used in clinical trials that is helping young people like Jordan, but it could take another 7 years for that drug to be available on the market. His parents cannot afford to wait for the FDA to give that drug its final approval. He could be in a wheelchair by then. This investigational drug could add years to Jordan's life, which would give him the chance to save others.

We have already heard, when Representative FITZPATRICK discussed Matt Bellina, his needs and his advocacy. We fight for him, and we fight for Mikaela Knapp.

At 24, Mikaela was diagnosed with a deadly form of kidney cancer that had already migrated into her bones before she even knew she was sick. She went through every known treatment in a matter of months and nothing worked. Her high school sweetheart, Keith, heard about a drug under development that was successfully treating people with this same cancer, but Mikaela was not allowed to enroll in the clinical trial. Mikaela and Keith launched a social media campaign to try to get access to the drug, but it wasn't enough. The FDA didn't help.

Mikaela died on April 24, 2014. Five months later, on September 4, the FDA gave final approval to the drug that might have saved her.

I fight for Diego Morris. When he was 10 years old, Diego woke up with a sore leg that his mom thought was just another sports injury, but the pain didn't go away. They knew something was wrong, but they never expected osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer.

After exhausting all treatments available, Diego's doctors recommended he try mifamurtide, which wasn't available in the United States but was being safely used and had been given the Prix Galien Award, the gold medal for pharmaceutical development in England. The Morris family wasted no time and made the move abroad to try to save Diego's life. The treatments worked. Now Diego is back home in Phoenix and back to playing his favorite sports.

We fight unitedly for the countless other patients who deserve a right to try. We must act without further delay. Again, I thank those who have been here to testify tonight.

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

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1329. An act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, November 2, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

3031. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's withdrawal of direct final rule—National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for Wool Fiberglass Manufacturing; Flame Attenuation Lines [EPA-HQ-OAR-2010-1042; FRL-9770-08-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AT58) received October 20, 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.

3032. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule—Voluntary Consensus Standards Update; Formaldehyde Emission Standards for Composite Wood Products [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2017-0245; FRL-9962-84] (RIN: 2070-AK36) received October 20, 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.

3033. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule—Approval and Promulgation of State Air Quality Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; City of Philadelphia; Control of Emissions from Existing Sewage Sludge Incineration Units [EPA-R03-OAR-2017-0509; FRL-9969-92-Region 3] received October 20, 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.

3034. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule—Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania's Adoption of Control Techniques Guidelines for Automobile and Light-Duty Truck Assembly Coatings [EPA-R03-OAR-2017-0342; FRL-9969-83-Region 3] received October 20, 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.

3035. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule—Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; 2017 revisions to NR 400 and 406 [EPA-R05-OAR-2017-0280; FRL-9969-89-Region 5] received October 20, 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.

3036. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule—Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Volatile Organic Compounds Definition [EPA-R05-OAR-2017-0323; FRL-9970-17-Region 5] received October 25, 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.

3037. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Publicly Owned Treatment Works Residual Risk and Technology Review [EPA-HQ-OAR-2016-0490; FRL-9969-95-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AS85) received October 20, 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.

3038. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Determination of Attainment by the Attainment Date for the 2008 Ozone Standard; Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-MD-DE Nonattainment

Area [EPA-R03-OAR-2016-0638; FRL-9969-93-Region 3] received October 20, 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.

3039. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Hexythiazox; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0155; FRL-9968-12] received October 25, 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.

3040. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Bacillus amyloliquefaciens strain F727; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0348; FRL-9968-40] received October 25, 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.

3041. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Air Plan Approval; Minnesota; State Board Requirements [EPA-R05-OAR-2016-0327; FRL-9970-14-Region 5] received October 25, 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.

3042. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting reports concerning international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-458, Sec. 7121(b)); (118 Stat. 3807); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3043. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 17-051, pursuant to Section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3044. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a notification of a nomination, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3045. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a notification of an action on nomination and a notification of a discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3046. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program Report for Fiscal Year 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 7201; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3047. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule—Federal Employees' Retirement System; Government Costs (RIN: 3206-AN22) received October 25, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3048. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule—Prevailing Rate Systems; Definition of Brown County, Wisconsin, and Forsyth and Mecklenburg Counties, North Carolina, to Nonappropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Areas (RIN: 3206-AN50) received October 25, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3049. A letter from the Deputy Chief Counsel, Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule—Elimination of Regulations Implementing Community Trade Adjustment Assistance Program [Docket No.: 170828819-7819-01] (RIN: 0610-AA70) received October 25, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3050. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Removing the Prohibition on the Importation of Jadeite or Rubies Mined or Extracted from Burma, and Articles of Jewelry Containing Jadeite or Rubies Mined or Extracted from Burma [CBP Dec. 17-15] (RIN: 1515-AE27) received October 25, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3051. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas, Department of the Interior, transmitting the report ''Second Five-Year Review of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended, Between the Governments of the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia'' and the report ''Second Five-Year Review of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended, Between the Governments of the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands'', pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1921c(h)(2); Public Law 108-188, Sec. 104(h)(2); (117 Stat. 2737); jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources and Foreign Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Ms. FOXX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.R. 3441. A bill to clarify the treatment of two or more employers as joint employers under the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938; with an amendment (Rept. 115–379). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WALDEN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 3387. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to improve public water systems and enhance compliance with such Act, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115–380). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BURGESS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 600. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 849) to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board (Rept. 115–381). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BURGESS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 601. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3922) to extend funding for certain public health programs, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–382). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 2201. A bill to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to exempt certain micro-offerings from the registration requirements of such Act, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–383). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BRADY of Texas:

H.R. 4200. A bill to provide for temporary funding for health insurance cost-sharing reduction payments and provide targeted tax relief, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York (for himself and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 4201. A bill to improve the ability of beginning farmers in the United States to acquire farms and participate in agricultural production, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROSKAM (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. YODER, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. BUCHANAN):

H.R. 4202. A bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit animal fighting in United States territories; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself and Mrs. MURPHY of Florida):

H.R. 4203. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, with regard to stalking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H.R. 4204. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for International Regulated Investment Companies; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ROTHFUS (for himself, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, and Mr. PERLMUTTER):

H.R. 4205. A bill to amend the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 to establish a three-judge independent examination review panel; to the Committee on Financial Services.

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

H.R. 4206. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize the physician self-referral prohibitions to promote care coordination in the merit-based incentive payment system and to facilitate physician practice participation in alternative payment models under the Medicare program, 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. BERGMAN (for himself and Mr. KEATING):

H.R. 4207. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to reinstate the returning worker exemption for H-2B visas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

H.R. 4208. A bill to reduce the risk posed by wildfires to communities and the most at-risk federally owned forests; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LARSON of Connecticut (for himself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. COHEN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 4209. A bill to rebuild the Nation's infrastructure, provide a consumer rebate to the American people, assist coal country, reduce harmful pollution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Energy and Commerce, Agriculture, Education and the Workforce, Natural Resources, and Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MARSHALL:

H.R. 4210. A bill to increase the maximum amount of assistance authorized under supplemental agricultural disaster assistance programs for livestock indemnity payments, livestock forage disaster assistance, and emergency assistance for livestock, honey bee, and farm-raised fish losses; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. MARSHALL:

H.R. 4211. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to provide to producers partial payments under the livestock indemnity program for livestock sold for salvage; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. MARSHALL:

H.R. 4212. A bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to increase support for conservation practices under the emergency conservation program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. MARSHALL:

H.R. 4213. A bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to establish a program to provide advance payments under the Emergency Conservation Program for the repair or replacement of fencing; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. MCCLINTOCK:

H.R. 4214. A bill to repeal the Western Area Power Administration borrowing authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself, Mr. KIND, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. BILIRAKIS):

H.R. 4215. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure that providers of services receive adequate payments for the acquisition of hematopoietic stem cells under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SABLAN:

H.R. 4216. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to make available additional funds for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands pilot project; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT (for himself and Mr. WALKER):

H.R. 4217. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to eliminate the deduction for living expenses incurred by members of Congress; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 4218. A bill to amend section 201 of title 18, United States Code, to redefine the term official act in bribery cases involving public officials to strengthen accountability and oversight; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. YOHO, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H. Con. Res. 89. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress with respect to United States policy toward Tibet and that the treatment of the Tibetan people should be an important factor in the conduct of United States relations with the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KHANNA (for himself and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H. Res. 599. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to United States policy towards Yemen, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona (for himself, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. ADERHOLT, Ms. BASS, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mrs. BLACK, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COMER, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. EVANS, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GALLAGHER, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. GROTHMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. HUIZENGA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. JONES, Mr. KIND, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LONG, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. MARINO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. POSEY, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. RUSH, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. WENSTRUP, and Mr. WITTMAN):

H. Res. 602. A resolution expressing support for the goals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption and the children awaiting families, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, and encouraging the people of the United States to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

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. BRADY of Texas:

H.R. 4200.

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

United States Constitution Article I Section 8

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4201.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. ROSKAM:

H.R. 4202.

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

Article I, Section 1, to exercise the legislative powers vested in Congress as granted in the Constitution; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, which gives Congress the authority ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof''; and (c) Article I, Section 9, Clause 7, which states that ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.''; and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes; and Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2, The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 4203.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H.R. 4204.

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

U.S. Constitution Art. I Sec. 8 cl. 1, under the ''Power To lay and collect Taxes'';

Amd. 16, under the ''power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration''; and

Art. I Sec. 8 cl. 18, under the power ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 4205.

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

The Commerce Clause, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution states that Congress shall have the power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. BUCSHON:

H.R. 4206.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BERGMAN:

H.R. 4207.

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

Article One, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. THOMPSON of California:

H.R. 4208.

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

U.S. CONST. art. I, §1

By Mr. LARSON of Connecticut:

H.R. 4209.

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

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

By Mr. MARSHALL:
H.R. 4210.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The ability to regulate interstate commerce pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3.
By Mr. MARSHALL:
H.R. 4211.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The ability to regulate interstate commerce pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3.
By Mr. MARSHALL:
H.R. 4212.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The ability to regulate interstate commerce pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3.
By Mr. MARSHALL:
H.R. 4213.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The ability to regulate interstate commerce pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3.
By Mr. MCCLINTOCK:
H.R. 4214.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution, ''The Borrowing Clause,'' which confers on Congress the power to borrow money on the credit of the United States.
By Mr. PAULSEN:
H.R. 4215.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.
By Mr. SABLAN:
H.R. 4216.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States.
By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:
H .R. 4217.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, section 8, clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution, and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.
By Ms. TENNEY:
H.R. 4218.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power ''to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department of Officer thereof''

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 116: Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 173: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. LOUDERMILK, and Mr. WALKER.
H.R. 215: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 285: Mr. MESSER.
H.R. 392: Ms. ROSEN and Mr. AGUILAR.
H.R. 394: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 398: Mr. SARBANES.
H.R. 535: Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. OLSON, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 548: Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 719: Ms. MCSALLY.
H.R. 721: Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 741: Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 750: Mr. HIGGINS of New York.
H.R. 754: Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, and Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 785: Mr. BUDD and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 810: Mr. EVANS.
H.R. 811: Mr. PALAZZO.
H.R. 846: Mr. PANETTA and Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 959: Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 968: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 1090: Mr. HURD.
H.R. 1133: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 1155: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 1156: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 1187: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 1192: Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, and Mr. NORMAN.
H.R. 1243: Mr. LOEBSACK and Mr. EVANS.
H.R. 1267: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 1295: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 1406: Mr. CARTWRIGHT and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 1421: Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 1444: Mr. DELANEY, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 1494: Mr. GOMEZ and Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 1563: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 1592: Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, and Mr. BUDD.
H.R. 1646: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 1676: Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.
H.R. 1691: Mr. LAMALFA and Mrs. TORRES.
H.R. 1730: Mr. CICILLINE and Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H.R. 1776: Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H.R. 1811: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1815: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 1825: Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 1847: Mr. HILL.
H.R. 1849: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.
H.R. 1876: Mr. DESJARLAIS.
H.R. 2073: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2095: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2101: Mr. OLSON and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 2123: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 2225: Mr. HUDSON, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 2267: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 2310: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. KINZINGER.
H.R. 2318: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 2319: Mr. ARRINGTON.
H.R. 2321: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 2421: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 2472: Mr. SARBANES and Mr. HIGGINS of New York.
H.R. 2495: Mr. RUSH and Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H.R. 2501: Mrs. HANDEL.
H.R. 2506: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 2584: Mr. VALADAO and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 2601: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 2651: Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. CRIST, and Mr. BUDD.
H.R. 2670: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 2712: Mr. DESANTIS.
H.R. 2723: Ms. MCSALLY.
H.R. 2740: Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2817: Mr. CHABOT.
H.R. 2832: Mr. EMMER.
H.R. 2851: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Ms. TENNEY, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, and Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 2856: Mr. LONG.
H.R. 2862: Mr. DENHAM and Mr. SABLAN.
H.R. 2865: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 2926: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 2967: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 2999: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 3034: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia and Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3077: Mr. DUNN and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H.R. 3117: Mr. LUCAS and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 3132: Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 3222: Mr. RASKIN and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 3274: Mrs. ROBY, Mr. VISCLOSKY, and Mr. SMUCKER.
H.R. 3282: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 3324: Mr. SCHWEIKERT.
H.R. 3330: Mr. WEBER of Texas and Mr. NORMAN.
H.R. 3350: Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. DUNN, and Mr. FASO.
H.R. 3423: Mr. FASO.
H.R. 3441: Mr. HILL.
H.R. 3443: Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 3513: Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 3528: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3533: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 3548: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 3590: Ms. BARRAGÁN.
H.R. 3632: Mr. VALADAO and Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 3634: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 3635: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3642: Mr. BYRNE, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.
H.R. 3666: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 3705: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
H.R. 3712: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.
H.R. 3755: Ms. LEE.
H.R. 3759: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 3784: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 3798: Mr. HOLDING.
H.R. 3814: Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 3822: Mr. GAETZ and Mr. PALMER.
H.R. 3848: Ms. ESHOO and Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 3875: Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.
H.R. 3878: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 3887: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3889: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 3892: Mr. BUCSHON.
H.R. 3897: Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. GROTHMAN, and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
H.R. 3906: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 3913: Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 3928: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 3937: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3970: Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 3985: Mr. DONOVAN.
H.R. 4007: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 4025: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 4036: Mr. JONES and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 4049: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 4059: Ms. PINGREE and Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H.R. 4072: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. MCNERNEY, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 4082: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. CORREA, and Mr. AGUILAR.
H.R. 4090: Mrs. ROBY.
H.R. 4093: Mr. GOMEZ.
H.R. 4101: Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. COMER, Mr. GIBBS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. GUTHRIE.
H.R. 4127: Mr. LONG.
H.R. 4131: Mr. ALLEN, Ms. FOXX, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr.

LONG, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. MEADOWS, and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.

H.R. 4143: Mr. MULLIN, Mr. PAULSEN, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 4145: Mr. PETERS and Mr. AGUILAR.

H.R. 4155: Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. COSTA, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CRIST, Mrs. BUSTOS, and Mr. CORREA.

H.R. 4168: Ms. ROSEN and Mr. KIHUEN.

H.R. 4173: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.

H.R. 4180: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 4182: Mr. LOUDERMILK.

H.R. 4184: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 4195: Ms. SPEIER.

H.R. 4198: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. RICHMOND.

H.J. Res. 32: Mr. PETERSON.

H.J. Res. 118: Mr. BYRNE.

H.J. Res. 120: Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.

H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. NOLAN.

H. Con. Res. 40: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H. Con. Res. 59: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.

H. Con. Res. 81: Mr. BEYER.

H. Res. 220: Mr. HUIZENGA.

H. Res. 279: Mr. VALADAO and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H. Res. 282: Mr. GALLEGO.

H. Res. 307: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. FARENTHOLD, and Mr. BABIN.

H. Res. 313: Mr. CULBERSON.

H. Res. 443: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi and Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H. Res. 466: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H. Res. 495: Mr. CONYERS.

H. Res. 529: Mr. POCAN and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.

H. Res. 570: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia and Mr. LAMBORN.

H. Res. 576: Mr. HURD and Mr. OLSON.

H. Res. 588: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.

H. Res. 593: Mr. TAKANO and Mr. DENT.

H. Res. 597: Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. NORCROSS, and Mr. PETERS.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017 No. 177

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal and ever-blessed God, thank You for waking us to see the light of this new day. Lord, on this All Saints' Day, we remember the unseen cloud of witnesses that surrounds us. We are grateful for all the saints who from their labors rest but whose works follow them.

We thank You for the many lawmakers in our history whose integrity, creativity, and diligence have helped to keep us free.

Lord, we praise You for all of Your gifts, the glimpses of beauty, the echoes of truth, and the kindness of friends. Thank You for all those who lived and died for freedom. Grant us in our day and generation to live to honor our noble heritage.

And Lord, please remember all of those affected by the violence in New York. Bring a speedy recovery to the injured.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

NEW YORK CITY TERROR ATTACK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday's attack in Manhattan was sickening, twisted, and heartbreaking. The suspect appears to have been inspired by ISIL. We know that in the days ahead, our intelligence community will make every effort to learn more about him and whether he had any connection to this terror group and its hateful ideology. But today we are thinking of everyone affected by this tragedy. We are praying for the victims and their families. We are thinking of our fellow Americans in New York. We are expressing our gratitude for the critical work of our first responders. To them we say: Thank you for your courage. Thank you for all you do, especially in the face of such a terrible tragedy like we witnessed yesterday.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, after 8 years of sluggish growth and missed opportunities for the middle class under 8 years of the Obama administration, the American people elected a new President and Congress dedicated to getting our country moving again after so many years of failed leftwing policies. We are working hard on joint legislative initiatives on tax reform.

We have also undertaken what has been described as ''the most ambitious regulatory rollback since Reagan.'' The administration has the ability to take serious action on its own, and it has. The Congress has taken important action many times as well. We have used the tools contained in the Congressional Review Act, which allows us to overturn certain regulations with a majority vote in Congress and the President's signature. The President signed all of the many CRA resolutions we passed already, which overturned regulations that threatened everything from job creation to economic growth.

The President will sign another CRA resolution today, one that will overturn a regulation that threatened to drive up costs for millions of Americans who carry a credit card. It is a regulation dreamed up by a government agency, the CFPB, that claims to protect consumers but seems to have found a way to actually harm them. The Treasury Department released a study showing how this regulation has little to do with consumer protection and everything to do with lining the pockets of trial lawyers. This unaccountable agency ignored that study and issued its regulation anyway.

We passed this Congressional Review Act resolution to protect consumers from wrongdoing while avoiding frivolous lawsuits that will only drive up costs for the millions of Americans who have a credit card. The CFPB continues to be one of the most unaccountable bureaucracies in Washington, and this Congress will continue to stand up for consumers even when the CFPB will not.

NOMINATION OF JOAN LARSEN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, when the Senate confirmed the nomination of Professor Amy Barrett to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, we took another important step to ensure that the Federal judiciary fulfills its role in our constitutional system. Now we have an opportunity to confirm another well-qualified woman to the bench, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Joan Larsen. President Trump nominated her to serve on the Sixth Circuit, and she will be a strong addition to that court and a benefit to our Nation.

After graduating first in her class from Northwestern's law school, Justice Larsen served as a law clerk for Judge David Sentelle of the DC Circuit Court and then for Justice Antonin Scalia. These clerkships honed Justice Larsen's legal abilities and respect for

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

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the rule of law, preparing her for a distinguished career.

Joan Larsen also served as the Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. Former government officials from both Republican and Democratic administrations wrote in strong support of her nomination, each of them holding her in the highest regard.

Joan Larsen later joined the law faculty at the University of Michigan, teaching there for many years. She excelled in academia, earning the praise of her students and the esteem of her colleagues. In fact, more than 30 of Michigan's deans and law professors wrote to support her nomination. They wrote that Justice Larsen's ''commitment to the rule of law and her capacity for top-flight legal analysis are both of the first order, and her personal integrity and decency are exceptional.'' Even when they disagreed, her colleagues praised Justice Larsen's generous manner, her personal integrity, as well as her legal acumen.

In 2015, Larsen was appointed to the Michigan Supreme Court. The next year, she won election to a full term, winning every single county in the State. Her fellow justices—even those with different ideologies—praised her intellect and her commitment to apply the law as it is written to every case before them.

Joan Larsen's time on the Michigan high court has shown a record of independence and of fairness. Here is how one practitioner put it in a letter to the Judiciary Committee: ''I am not a Republican,'' he wrote. ''Justice Larsen approaches cases with an open mind and an independence from party affiliation. . . . I believe that . . . Justice Larsen has had a very positive influence on the Michigan Supreme Court. In my view, she would be a deserving addition to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.''

Another lawyer wrote the committee, advising that he ''has practiced law in Michigan for 39 years'' and is ''a past president of the Michigan Association for Justice (formerly the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association).'' He goes on to say that Justice Larsen ''has demonstrated on the bench that she is precisely who she is in person, a genuine, thoughtful individual who respects precedent, the common law and the role that lawyers and judges play in society. . . . I have no hesitation in telling you that Justice Larsen will make an excellent judge on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.''

In conclusion, President Trump continues to nominate smart, well-qualified, and impartial individuals to our Nation's Federal courts. Justice Larsen, like each of the other nominees before her, was nominated on the basis of her belief in the rule of law and her commitment to apply the law fairly to everyone who enters her courtroom.

Once again, I would also like to thank Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY for his leadership on the Judiciary Committee, tirelessly working to bring the President's nominees to the floor.

I look forward to voting to confirm Joan Larsen today, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me.

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 and resume consideration of the Larsen nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Joan Louise Larsen, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NEW YORK CITY TERROR ATTACK

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise this morning with a heavy heart. My city, my dear city of New York, no stranger to terrorism, was once again its victim yesterday.

Yesterday afternoon, a man deliberately drove a rented truck into groups of pedestrians and cyclists, killing eight and injuring about a dozen more. Some of the injured were schoolchildren. These people were biking or walking home, enjoying a brisk and beautiful New York autumn day. It is tragic. It leaves a hole in your stomach.

Our hearts go out to the victims and their families, and we wish all of the injured a full and speedy recovery. We are also grateful—deeply grateful—to the New York Police Department and the first responders, especially Officer Ryan Nash, 28 years old, who was the first on the scene. He reacted quickly and decisively to bring down the attacker and bring him into custody. Who knows how much worse the tragedy would have been without his actions.

As one of thousands of New Yorkers who regularly ride on the path where this attack took place—in the last month, I have ridden on it twice—it hits close to home. My daughter went to the school near the scene, Stuyvesant High School, and she used the bike path I don't know how many times. This is our territory, our home.

The attacks are meant to confuse and terrorize, but, as the world learned after 9/11 and will learn again, New York doesn't scare easily. New Yorkers are resilient. We always bounce back. We won't let these terrorists get their way or affect our way of life. We will never let terror prevail.

True to form—something that made my heart swell with pride—the New York City Halloween parade marched on last night. Thousands of school kids went right into Stuyvesant today. The terrorists cannot stop us. They cannot change our way of life. We love New York. We love America. That bond holds us together.

ANTITERRORISM FUNDING

Now, I have seen the tweets from President Trump. After September 11, the first thing President Bush did was to invite Senator Clinton and me to the White House, where he pledged to do whatever was in his power to help our city. President Bush, in a moment of national tragedy, understood the meaning of his high office and sought to bring our country together.

President Trump, where is your leadership?

The contrast between President Bush's actions after 9/11 and President Trump's actions this morning could not be starker.

Again, President Trump, where is your leadership?

I would say in closing that I have always believed that immigration is good for America. I believe it today.

President Trump, instead of politicizing and dividing America, which he always seems to do at times of national tragedy, should be bringing us together and focusing on the real solution—antiterrorism funding, which he proposed to cut in his most recent budget. So I am calling on President Trump to rescind his proposed cuts to this vital antiterrorism funding immediately. Our city relies on this funding to track potential terrorists and to snuff out attacks. The NYPD, which bravely and quickly responded to the scene yesterday and brought the mayhem to an end, depends on this antiterrorism funding to keep our city safe day in and day out. So, again, I am calling on the President to rescind his proposed cuts to this vital antiterrorism funding immediately.

Instead of dividing, instead of politicizing, do something real, Mr. President. Restore these funds now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, this week the Senate is moving through a series of votes to fill vacancies in the Federal appeals court. President Trump has nominated highly qualified, mainstream judges and legal scholars to do these jobs. Now, Democrats have responded once again with delay and with obstruction. It is clear to me that we need to change the rules in the Senate that govern how we debate nominations in this body. All year Democrats have been putting up roadblocks to nominations. They have forced the majority leader to file cloture so that

then we can confirm nominees like these four judges.

As of last Friday, Democrats have forced the Senate to file cloture 47 different times when we have had to have cloture votes on President Trump's nominees. There were only six cloture votes at this point for the previous four Presidents—five for Obama, none for George W. Bush, one for Bill Clinton, and none under the Presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush. These are the kind of hoops that the Democrats have been making the Senate jump through in an effort to confirm President Trump's nominees.

The procedure has been set in place to allow for debate. Well, debate is a good thing in the Senate, as long as debate is actually occurring. It is a chance for Senators to stand up, to say what they like or what they don't like about a nominee. Now, if no one wants to debate, we should just move things along and have the vote. There is one Senate rule that allows for as much as 30 hours of debate time on Presidential nominations after we have actually had the cloture vote. Now, in reality, very little of that time that is spent on the Senate floor is actually being used for the debate. In the past, both sides would agree to waive the time requirements and to move on to other Senate business, which is what we need to do to get the country continuing to move forward. But what is happening now is that Democrats are insisting on cloture votes, and then they are insisting that we use hour after hour after hour, even when there is no one here to debate what is the issue or the person in front of us.

It is time to end this pointless spectacle. The Senate used to be called the world's greatest deliberative body. Democrats have turned it into the world's most paralyzed deliberative body.

We have more than 125 nominees for various jobs who have had hearings in committee, who have testified in committee, who have been voted on in committee, who have cleared through the entire committee-vetting process and are now waiting for a vote on the Senate floor—125 of them. Most of these people have bipartisan support. They will be confirmed easily and eventually. They should be confirmed immediately. There should be no reason for Democrats' stalling tactics except, once again, to slow down the pace of other progress in the Senate on legislative issues.

Mr. President, look at what happened with one judge last week. It is a case you are very familiar with. Scott Palk was nominated by President Trump to serve on the U.S. district court. He had bipartisan support in the Judiciary Committee. He went to the committee, had a hearing in the committee, and with bipartisan support was voted out of the committee. That was in June—more than 4 months ago.

Now, apparently that is not good enough for the Democrats—not at all. They are only interested in slowing down the work of the Senate. So we had a cloture vote on the nominee. It was 1 of the 47 cloture votes that we talked about. We had to have a cloture vote. Every Republican and 27 Democrats voted for him. So he had bipartisan support. We still had to allow all of this wasted time for the debate. We couldn't conduct any of the other business of the Senate during the time because the Democrats insisted that we use all of the debate time. Now, they could have very easily agreed to waive the rules, as we do, and go straight to a vote. We wanted to do that. The Democrats refused.

So how much of that time—those 30 hours—did the Democrats actually spend on the floor debating this person's qualifications to be a Federal judge? How many of those 30 hours did the Democrats use? None. How many minutes did they use? None. Not one Democrat came to the floor of the Senate to talk about that judge. Not a single Democrat even bothered to say a word against his nomination. There were fewer than 20 minutes of total talk on the floor of the Senate. Through hour after hour after hour of ongoing time, there were fewer than 20 minutes spent actually talking about the judge, and it was all spent in praise by the Republicans. We still had to run out the clock because that is the delay game the Democrats are playing in the Senate. The Senate had to waste hours and hours when we could have finished debating in less than 20 minutes. The Democrats have done this same thing time after time after time, day after day, wasting day after day.

Things take time in the Senate. We understand that. That is what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they formed the two bodies of Congress, the House and the Senate. There is no excuse, though, for Democrats abusing the process to make things take even longer. Democrats aren't using the rules for debate. They are not using the rules for deliberation. It is only for delay. It hasn't always been this way, and there is no reason it should continue to be this way.

The Senate had a different standard for nominations a few years ago, and that was in the 113th Congress. In years 2013 and 2014, the Senate allowed just 2 hours of debate after cloture was invoked on nominations for district court judges. That is 2 hours more than the Democrats actually spent debating this judge's nomination last week. The rules said that we would have up to 8 hours to debate executive branch nominations below the Cabinet level. Then, for Cabinet Secretaries, for Justices on the Supreme Court, and for circuit courts, it was the full 30 hours of debate. Thirty hours now is what we allow every nomination today, and Democrats have shown that in most cases it is far too much time because even though we have to spend all the time, they use very little of it talking about the nominees.

We need a fair debate on every nomination. The procedure from 2013 and 2014, with fair debate on nominations, is one that was fair. The way the Democrats are wasting time today to keep us from doing our work is not fair. I believe it is time to return to the rules for debating nominees that the Senate used 3 years ago. There will still be plenty of time for Senators to debate the nominees, to raise objections if there are any. Every Senator could be on the record. There are just a lot of hours that we could avoid that are being wasted today that could be used to do the people's business of this country. A President's nominations of qualified people to important jobs was never meant to be a tool for delay in the Senate or to be an obstruction the way the Democrats have been using it.

Now, these rules that we used in 2013 and 2014 were the result of a compromise. Democrats controlled the Senate at the time. A Democrat, Barack Obama, was in the White House making the nominations, and Republicans agreed to make these changes to the rules. It was part of a bipartisan group, and I was part of that group. There were eight Senators. They worked on this compromise—four Republicans and four Democrats. Senator MCCAIN and Senator ALEXANDER were part of this group. Senator SCHUMER, who is now the Democrat leader, was part of this group. There was overwhelming support for these changes on both sides of the aisle.

It is time to do it again. Let's change the Senate rules and go back to the process that Senator SCHUMER supported in 2013 and 2014. Today, the schedule allows us to do one or two nominations in a typical week. If we go back to the 2014 standard, we could clear multiple nominations in a day. The Republican Senate has been busy this year, and we have made progress on behalf of the American people. We have passed 15 resolutions rolling back destructive, Obama-era regulations using the Congressional Review Act and signed into law by the President. We passed a budget that will help give Americans at home a raise by cutting their taxes and giving us an opportunity to do the kind of tax relief, tax reform, tax reductions, tax cuts that the American people are looking for. We need to do more. It is time for Democrats to stop abusing the rules just to delay the process. It is time to go back to the previous standard of debating nominations. It is time to pick up the pace and do the job the American people expect us to do.

Now, if Democrats have a different approach and don't want to accept the standard of debate that was set in the previous Congress, then I believe it is time for us to force that change. If Democrats maintain their lockstep opposition to real progress on judicial vacancies and other nominees, we should give them a chance to vote on their continued obstruction. We can vote on these nominees in a straightforward

and efficient way or we can vote to return to the precedent of the 113th Congress. That is the choice. Either way, it is time to vote.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the magnitude of this moment should be apparent to all. A sitting U.S. President's campaign chief and his protege have been indicted for conspiring against the United States. Another campaign adviser has pleaded guilty for lying to the FBI about meetings with Russians. At those meetings, he illegally discussed obtaining dirt on the President's political opponent and emails that had been stolen.

Two points need to be underscored for the American people. First, these indictments and conviction are a sober, shattering moment in American history. Second, all of us on both sides of the aisle should come together to support the work of the special counsel and assure that he is able to follow the facts and the law and all of the evidence, wherever they may lead.

This moment will stand as a landmark in American history, just as many of the moments in Watergate did. This investigation has proceeded more quickly than Watergate did. John Mitchell was indicted in 1974 for conspiracy, perjury, and obstruction of justice. He was convicted a year later. That indictment took a year and a half of investigation. These indictments have occurred just 11 months after the election and barely 6 months after the beginning of the investigation.

We know that the President's campaign hired two alleged criminals and one admitted criminal. Two of them were foreign agents, and the campaign was run by a Russian agent, unregistered, now charged with conspiring against the United States. He was supported by another Russian foreign agent who was also charged with the same 12 criminal counts. These two individuals, Paul Manafort and Rick Gates, were significant people in the Trump campaign.

In the case of Gates, his influence continued through the early months of the new administration. Manafort ran Trump's campaign at its most critical point, and he organized and directed the 2016 Republican National Committee convention, including the critical delegate-corralling effort against a potential ''Never Trump'' insurrection, securing the Republican nomination for Donald Trump.

Under Manafort's leadership of the Trump campaign, the Republican Party stripped language from their platform that would have called for arming Ukraine against Russian aggression. Ahead of the convention, Manafort also offered to brief a Russian billionaire on the state of the 2016 race. The convention he helped organize became a venue for a meeting between Attorney General Sessions and the Russian ambassador, after which the Attorney General misled Congress, implying—indeed stating—that it never took place.

The Trump campaign also worked extensively with George Papadopoulos, a foreign adviser whose actions constitute the most significant indication of possible collusion—so far the most significant—between the Trump campaign and Russian officials.

Papadopoulos was named a foreign policy adviser in March 2016 and began communicating with Russian nationals the next month. He met with a professor for breakfast in London. They discussed stolen emails from Hillary Clinton and subsequently shuttled messages to the Kremlin and back for the Trump campaign.

He worked with officials at the highest level of the Trump campaign. His direct boss, in fact, was Jeff Sessions, who was then the head of Trump's national security advisory committee, and he is now, of course, the Attorney General. He communicated extensively with the campaign manager and members of the national security team.

President Trump tweeted today that he was a ''young, low level volunteer,'' but the President sang his praises at a meeting with the Washington Post editorial board in March 2016, calling him an ''energy and oil consultant, excellent guy.'' These revelations are stunning.

Now the President is at a critical juncture. He can choose the course of cooperation or confrontation. He is literally teetering on the brink of a decision that could prove disastrous for himself and for America if he chooses a constitutional confrontation.

We are at a moment very much like the one that occurred in Watergate. It is still memorable to many of us in this Chamber, although we were not here at the time. Our Nation could be careening toward a constitutional crisis. Some of the actions the President has already taken, such as firing Jim Comey as FBI Director, may be evidence of obstruction of justice in the investigation by the special counsel. As part of our oversight responsibility, the Judiciary Committee must continue its work in investigating that firing and other actions that may constitute obstruction of justice.

Firing the special counsel himself is something only the President could try to do. It would be the ultimate act of contempt for the rule of law that is rightly seen as the actions of someone who has something to hide.

At stake is more than just this President or this special counsel. It is literally the rule of law. To this President, the rule of law may be meaningless, a facade or a fiction, but that is exactly why Congress must give the judicial branch specific, enforceable power to stop the President from firing the special counsel.

That is the purpose of legislation I have introduced, along with colleagues. I am here to call upon this body to support and pass the Special Counsel Independence Protection Act.

I called for the special counsel to be established in February of this year and was joined by 10 of my colleagues in that call. It was based on credible allegations that the Trump team had colluded with the Russian Government. The Special Counsel Independence Protection Act, which I have cosponsored along with colleagues, seeks to forestall the kind of potential constitutional crisis raised by the President's threats not so long ago and his labeling the investigation a hoax and a witch hunt.

The Washington Post reported today that advisers close to the President are urging that, in fact, he take more aggressive action against the special counsel. The specter of Presidential action against Robert Mueller, designed to stop or stymie a virtually unavoidable and necessary criminal investigation of the President himself, makes safeguarding the special counsel more urgent and necessary now than ever before.

Rather than encouraging Presidential abuse of power by inaction, the Congress must move forward right away to check potential malfeasance and abuse before it occurs. Even the threat of such political interference constituting potential obstruction of justice undermines the special counsel's investigation. It makes witnesses less likely to cooperate. It discourages the agents and investigators working for the special counsel. It creates unnecessary confusion in the American public. Only judicial review can provide the check against such abuse and ensure confidence that the special counsel will proceed methodically and systematically to uphold the rule of law and follow the facts in evidence, wherever they may lead. That is what the American people want him to do. That is what we should guarantee that he will do. Make no mistake, this investigation will continue and conclude fairly and fully. The only question is how much turmoil and how much damage is done in the course of that investigation.

Clearly, like any investigation and prosecution, this one is a mosaic, consisting of many different diverse pieces and already it is coming together on the Trump campaign's contacts with Russian officials. They include, for example, campaign adviser Papadopoulos's contacts with a Russian agent who claimed he had ''dirt'' on Hillary Clinton; Donald Trump, Jr., and the campaign aides' Trump Tower meeting with Russian agents to obtain information on Clinton; Jared

Kushner's meetings with sanctioned VEB Russian bank CEO Sergey Gorkov; Sessions' meetings with the Russian Ambassador; the Cambridge Analytica CEO's outreach to WikiLeaks to obtain Hillary Clinton's missing emails; and former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn's dining with President Putin in Moscow. Those pieces of the mosaic are only the beginning. We are at a critical stage—the end of the beginning, not the beginning of the end.

As a former prosecutor, I know investigations take time. The best investigations are done without deadlines. In an important case like this one, and in a complex and challenging one, we must allow all the time necessary to assemble that full mosaic and put together the pieces of this puzzle.

The Watergate scandal took 2 years to unravel, from Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's first piece in the Washington Post in June of 1972 to Nixon's resignation in August of 1974. We are less than a year into the Trump Presidency and fewer than 10 months into this investigation.

The first individuals to be indicted in the Watergate scandal were considered to be generally outside the President's inner circle. They were E. Howard Hunt, G. Gordon Liddy, and the Watergate burglars in September of 1972. No one knew—and many denied—the conspiracy that involved the President and his top lieutenants at the time of those first indictments. In these cases, too—in these first indictments and conviction—a lot more is to come.

We cannot wait until the President potentially shuts down his special counsel to come to his defense. Already, the rule of law is under threat. On Sunday—the day before the indictments were handed down—the President tweeted: ''DO SOMETHING!'' with regard to the Russia investigation. Although his reference was unclear exactly what he meant and whom the message was targeting, it certainly was an indication that some kind of action might be taken to thwart the investigation.

Any interference in this investigation will be a red line for me and for others in this Chamber. Let the President hear that message loud and clear. There is a red line that cannot be crossed. It is political interference or intrusion in the special counsel's investigation, and it will be met with a firestorm, I hope, on both sides of the aisle. My conversations with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle indicate they would share our outrage and outcry if there is an effort to stop and stymie this investigation or if there is any other kind of political interference in it.

Senators GRAHAM, BOOKER, WHITEHOUSE, COONS, and I have cosponsored measures that will help protect the special counsel. There are two measures now, but they are so closely similar that they should be brought together, and conversations are underway to do so. I expect we will have a single bill in the very near future.

We should stand with one voice against obstruction of this investigation. I ask that my colleagues go on the record now to state that they will absolutely resist and oppose any interference by the executive branch into this investigation or investigations that are underway by our congressional committees—on the House side, the Intelligence Committee and, in the Senate, the Judiciary Committee along with our Intelligence Committee. The congressional committees have separate purposes. In the Judiciary Committee, we have the unique responsibility of oversight over the Department of Justice and the FBI. We have the unique responsibility to prevent the obstruction of justice and to uncover it, as is indicated by the firing of Jim Comey. My hope is that investigation will proceed and that it will be bipartisan, so we will have hearings and subpoena witnesses with public testimony under oath and eventually some report to the American people. That is my hope, and that will be our decision here.

The decision we cannot and should not make is what the outcome will be of the special counsel investigation. We must guarantee—and we have this responsibility in the Congress—that there is adequate funding and authority for the special counsel, that there is no effort to either cut resources or limit the purview of the special counsel or place constraints on the time it may take for this probe to conclude. There should be no firing and no pardons, and we should speak out and stand up to assure that message reaches the White House loud and clear.

This moment is one of historic magnitude. I cannot emphasize how strongly I feel but also how deeply my colleagues have expressed to me their own feelings about our responsibility in this moment.

The grand jury that is bringing these indictments is an arm of the courts, which should be independent of both the executive and legislative branches. That independence gives the special counsel some new measure of permanence and protection, but the President can still try to fire the special counsel. He cannot fire the grand jury or the U.S. District Court judge who impaneled the grand jury. Judicial review of any firing of the special counsel, which is the core principle of our measure—the Special Counsel Independence Protection Act—would add a highly significant protection to not just deter misguided and deeply mistaken actions, throwing our Nation into turmoil, but also assuring that confidence and trust remains with the special counsel, and he can follow facts and the law with the full support of the American people. The American people can put their trust and faith in him and in our courts. We should assure that we uphold that faith and trust.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

HEALTHCARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, since day one, the President of the United States has made it clear that his top priority, when it comes to healthcare in our country, is to score political points by attacking ObamaCare. He has even said repeatedly that healthcare in our country will ''implode,'' but this was not just a prediction that President Trump made, it was his goal, and he has tried virtually everything he can do to make that implosion a reality.

In January, he abruptly pulled funding for outreach days before the end of the 2017 open enrollment period without any analysis of how that might affect patients and families, and he signed executive orders specifically designed to inject uncertainty and increased costs into the healthcare system.

President Trump then dedicated the spring and summer to attempting to jam partisan, extraordinarily destructive legislation through the House and Senate to repeal the Affordable Care Act, despite one independent analysis after another showing that each version of TrumpCare would cause premiums to spike, take coverage away from millions of people, rip protections away from patients with preexisting conditions, and gut Medicaid.

This fall—after TrumpCare failed another time in the Senate—he slashed by 90 percent the investments that help inform families about their coverage options and followed through on his year-long threat to discontinue payments designed to lower out-of-pocket costs for low-income enrollees.

This is a scenario that healthcare experts said would cause mass consumer confusion and anxiety, one that insurance companies planned for by shifting that burden of uncertainty to patients and taxpayers in the form of higher premiums and fewer options in State marketplaces.

Now, this is by no means the full list of ways President Trump has attempted his healthcare sabotage, but it does explain why we are here now. Today is the first day of the open enrollment period for 2018, and as a direct result of this President's actions, families are going to see higher premiums, more out-of-pocket costs, and fewer coverage options. Many families will have to change their coverage if they want to avoid paying hundreds of dollars more in premiums.

At a time when we need to continue to do more to bend the healthcare cost curve in the right direction, taxpayers are being burdened with higher

healthcare costs to the Federal Government—not because of any improvement in quality or comprehensiveness, just because of the chaos this administration has caused.

In fact, just last week, the Trump administration proposed a rule to double down on the sabotage in 2019 that would let insurers cover fewer services in addition to raising costs. I have to say, I just truly never imagined that a President of the United States would so openly and uncaringly root for the people of this country to be worse off. But that is exactly what President Trump is doing. It needs to be said, and it needs to be stopped.

What makes this even more frustrating is that a lot of it could have been stopped months ago if Republican leaders hadn't insisted on trying to help this administration carry out its partisan, wrecking-ball healthcare strategy.

Back in September, Chairman ALEXANDER and I were very near agreement on a bipartisan bill to stabilize healthcare markets and protect families from higher premiums and out-of-pocket costs through regular order, through a process that actually engaged over half the Senate. We were on the verge of reaching an agreement when Republican leaders froze our negotiations. Why? In order to jam TrumpCare through the Senate one more time.

Let me repeat that. Republican leaders hit the pause button on a bipartisan process that could have lowered premiums and stabilized markets, exposing our patients and families to the full impact of President Trump's sabotage.

That is the bad news, but the good news is that the legislation Chairman ALEXANDER and I ultimately agreed on can and will still have an impact—not just a few years from now but in 2018—if Republican leaders don't stand in the way again. Our bill would, among other priorities, continue out-of-pocket cost reduction payments and make sure that patients and families, not insurance companies, see the benefit of that certainty in the form of rebates next year. The legislation Chairman ALEXANDER and I have proposed, with 12 Democratic and 12 Republican cosponsors, would do a lot to help us get things back on track. It would tie President Trump's hands on sabotage, and it would send a very powerful message that elected officials in Congress can work together to get things done when we focus on common ground rather than scoring political points.

I would once again urge the majority leader to allow our legislation to get a vote. It has the support of 60-plus Senators, and it is growing. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has said that it provides billions in savings and would stabilize the markets this year and lower premiums in 2019. And the President told Chairman ALEXANDER that he supports this process moving forward.

There is no reason to wait. There is absolutely no excuse for inaction, and I am going to continue doing everything I can to make that clear until Republican leaders finally listen to the patients and families they serve.

Mr. President, while I am here today, I also want to take a few minutes to speak on another way that I believe President Trump and Republicans are taking our country in a direction that is deeply harmful; that is, by stacking our courts with extreme conservative judges.

The Senate this week is going to vote on four judicial nominees who each have the far-rightwing seal of approval. Two are on President Trump's short list for Supreme Court Justices, meaning they would automatically vote to overturn Roe v. Wade. Unfortunately, their views on many things—LGBTQ rights, sexual assault, criminal justice, and corporate interests—are just as deeply troubling. One of the nominees we are considering this week advocated for using electric shocks for criminal punishment, and two—Amy Barrett and Stephanos Bibas—were nominated only after Republicans blocked the nominations of Myra Selby and Rebecca Haywood—both who happen to be African-American women—to the respective benches.

It is clear that as Republican leaders' list of legislative failures grows longer, their effort to enact their agenda by administrative action and by stacking the courts is only going to accelerate. That might appeal to extreme conservatives—in fact, I am pretty sure it does—but the truth is that whether it is healthcare or infrastructure or taxes, most people across the country really want to see Congress working together.

I am going to continue doing everything I can to speak out and fight back against extreme, harmful steps that are being taken by this administration and allowed by Republican leaders here in Congress and also to show there is a better way to get things done—by working under regular order, across the aisle, and putting people, not politics, first. That is what families rightfully expect, and that is what we all should be focused on.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

NEW YORK CITY TERROR ATTACK

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I would like to start my remarks this morning by offering my thoughts to the victims of yesterday's horrendous act of terror in New York City, my thanks to the first responders, and I would note the resiliency of the people of New York. Once again, they are going forward with their lives today, showing the world and anyone who would do us harm that Americans stand together and that we move forward regardless of what our foes may try to do.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, I also rise today to encourage Granite Staters—as my colleague from Washington did—and people across the country to take advantage of the health insurance open enrollment period, which begins today and runs through December 15.

Every citizen deserves quality, affordable health insurance coverage to help them live healthy and productive lives. Access to healthcare is critical to the freedom, dignity, and well-being of our citizens, and it also contributes to a productive workforce and a thriving economy.

I still remember meeting with a constituent named Jo, about a year or two ago, who has a chronic health condition. When she lost her job in 2009 and lost her health insurance with it, her condition deteriorated to the point where she couldn't work, and a downward spiral ensued. She lost her home. She couldn't get healthcare because she had no resources. Because of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, she was eventually able to get healthcare, to get the surgery and therapy she needed, and now she is working again. So healthcare is not only for the benefit of the individual who receives it; it helps that individual become a productive member of our workforce.

Affordable, quality care is also critically important to those who are working but may not otherwise be able to afford health insurance even if employed. It is something I have heard often this year from citizens of my State, as my Republican colleagues attempted to pass TrumpCare legislation that would have led to higher healthcare costs for less care.

At an emergency field hearing in June that I held with Senator SHAHEEN, we heard from a woman named Enna from Exeter, NH. Enna, who is self-employed, said that prior to the Affordable Care Act, her family was unable to maintain insurance consistently. Even when she did have it, her previous policy didn't cover critical preventive care that she needed. As a result of the ACA, Enna has been able to purchase affordable health insurance through the marketplace in New Hampshire for herself and her family of four, giving them the peace of mind that comes with having health insurance, while continuing to grow her own business.

Enna's story is the story of so many people in New Hampshire, and it represents why it is essential for people across the country to take advantage of this open enrollment period.

From today through December 15, Granite Staters and all Americans have an opportunity to sign up for a healthcare plan at www.coveringnewhampshire.org or www.healthcare.gov. It is also important for people to take this opportunity to see what other plans are available, to shop around and see whether other plans offer more savings than their current one does, and it is critical to educate our friends and neighbors about these options, given the Trump administration's attempts to sabotage our Nation's healthcare

system. These sabotage attempts include the Department of Health and Human Services slashing the Affordable Care Act's outreach and advertising budgets ahead of open enrollment, which provide key information and resources for those who need to sign up for care. It is clear that the Trump administration doesn't want people to know they can enroll, but that doesn't change the fact that the Affordable Care Act is the law of the land, people can still get covered, and financial assistance is available for many on the healthcare exchange.

We must end this sabotage and continue to work together on efforts to lower costs and build on and improve the Affordable Care Act, and that is exactly what I am focused on.

I was proud to join HELP Committee leaders, Senators Alexander and Murray, to cosponsor bipartisan legislation that would stabilize health insurance markets and lower costs for hard-working Americans. This bill includes a provision that the New Hampshire Insurance Department could use to support its proposal to create a reinsurance pool to help reduce premiums in our State's individual health insurance market. This legislation proves it is possible to work across party lines to make progress in our healthcare system. It is clear that it has the votes to pass. We need Republican leadership to bring it up for a vote.

It is up to all of us to come together and make sure that healthcare is truly available and affordable to all of our people and to encourage our fellow citizens to sign up for the care they need to help their families thrive.

The enrollment period is a critical time for the health and well-being of our citizens and for our productivity, as well, as a country. I encourage Granite Staters to take advantage of this opportunity and receive the benefits that come with affordable healthcare.

Mr. President, I also want to take a moment to address the continued efforts this week from President Trump and my Republican colleagues to push through nominees who will truly reshape our Federal judiciary.

An independent and impartial judiciary is critical to democracy and to our march toward progress. Our Founders established our court system to serve as an independent arbiter that would protect the rights of all Americans and ensure equal justice under our laws. Unfortunately, the nominees who have been selected by the President and who have been voted on throughout this year have been handpicked by far-right groups to serve a conservative agenda. We have seen judicial nominees who have not committed to upholding the precedent of Roe v. Wade and protecting a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions and control her own destiny in doing so, nominees who have stood against basic rights and freedoms for LGBTQ Americans and who have opposed protections for workers' rights. This is unacceptable.

We are voting on lifetime appointments that require a commitment to equal justice, objectivity, and sound judgment. I will continue to oppose judicial nominees who do not live up to those standards, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 30 minutes of postcloture time remaining, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, prior to a vote on confirmation of the Larsen nomination.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, it is my understanding that I have 25 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to address the issue we are voting on in a few minutes. The Senate will vote on the nomination of Michigan Supreme Court Justice Joan Larsen to serve on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Though she currently lives in Michigan, Justice Larsen was born in and hails from my State of Iowa. In fact, she and I share the same alma mater, the University of Northern Iowa, for our bachelor's degrees. I have also learned, since meeting Justice Larsen, that her father was the longtime CEO of the Lutheran Services in Iowa. He is now retired, but during the time he was the CEO, he was the very same person with whom I often met for breakfast when he would come to Washington to tell us about the concerns of the Lutheran Services in Iowa. At that time, I never knew I might be speaking in favor of his daughter. I didn't even know of his daughter at that time. So I am proud to see a fellow Iowan and such an eminently qualified nominee be nominated to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

For those who may not be familiar with her career and accomplishments, a few minutes will give me an opportunity to share them with you. I think you will find, as I have, that Justice Larsen is particularly well suited to serve as a Federal appellate judge.

Justice Larsen has an outstanding academic record, having received numerous awards during her undergraduate and law school careers. Justice Larsen was a Presidential Scholar at the University of Northern Iowa and graduated with the highest honors. She graduated first in her class at the Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, where she won the Justice John Paul Stevens Award for Academic Excellence and served as editor of the Northwestern University Law Review.

She began her legal career as a clerk for Judge Sentelle on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals and then clerked for Justice Scalia on the U.S. Supreme Court. Following her clerkships, Justice Larsen joined the DC firm of Sidley Austin, one of the largest law firms in the United States. Justice Larsen spent 2 years as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel, where she provided legal advice to the President and executive agencies on difficult issues of constitutional and statutory interpretation.

Justice Larsen has taught constitutional law and criminal law at the University of Michigan Law School since 1998, where she has earned the respect of faculty members and students alike. She won the L. Hart Wright Award for Excellence in Teaching early in her teaching career. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Justice Larsen ran Michigan's clerkship program, helping hundreds of students and alumni pursue clerkships at the Federal and State levels. As an adjunct professor, she continues to run the law school's Moot Court Program.

Her colleagues at the University of Michigan praised Justice Larsen and wrote:

> Even among the talented and ambitious lawyers at an elite law school, Joan stands out for her ability to make the penetrating insight that untangles some knotty problem of statutory interpretation or judiciary doctrine. Especially distinctive, moreover, is the rigor and even-handedness she brings to her analysis.

I will share one more example from that letter because I think it addresses some of my colleagues' concerns, who are on the other side of the aisle, as to her approach to the law.

Her colleagues wrote:

> For those of us who have found ourselves on the opposite side of a debate with Joan about a case, a statute, or some broader issue of constitutional history, she has demonstrated time and again that she is both a gracious and intellectually honest partner in the collaborative project of figuring things out. What matters for Joan is not winning but working out the right answer.

Now I bring emphasis to this last sentence.

> Even when you disagree with her, it is impossible not to respect her and to take pleasure in the process of refining the issues actually in dispute.

In other words, as I see it, Justice Larsen is and will be a jurist who seeks to find the right answer, never simply one she prefers as a matter of policy.

We can already see from her time on the Michigan Supreme Court that Justice Larsen is a principled jurist with an impressive legal acumen. She has served with distinction on that court since she was appointed in 2015. It happens that she was elected to the position in 2016, in her own right, by a resounding majority, winning every county in Michigan. Colleagues on the court have praised her sharp legal analysis, her clear and crisp writing, and, most importantly, her work ethic.

Outside the courtroom, Justice Larsen is actively involved in volunteer efforts to serve disadvantaged children, and she works with Michigan's veterans, drugs, sobriety, and mental health court programs.

Some of my colleagues have said they will not support the nomination

because Justice Larsen was included on President Trump's short list for the Supreme Court. Is there anything wrong with the President suggesting whom he is going to put on the Supreme Court if he is elected President? If you look at her background, it should be no surprise that she was included on that list. She is an accomplished legal academic, a mainstream jurist, and is well respected on a bipartisan basis throughout the legal community.

Because my colleagues have been concerned about everyone on that list, at her hearing, I asked Justice Larsen when she learned that her name was on that list. She replied: ''The date it was announced . . . it was a complete surprise to me.''

I also asked her about judicial independence and whether she could rule against the President who nominated her.

She replied:

> I would have no trouble ruling against the President who appointed me or any successor President as well. Judicial independence means one thing, one very simple thing—

At this point I want to emphasize—

> and that is putting the law above everything else, the statutes passed by this body, and the Constitution of the United States. So I would have absolutely no trouble, and, indeed, that would be my duty.

Here is the most outrageous reason I have heard for voting against Justice Larsen. This should surprise a lot of people. Some in the minority have suggested that she is somehow responsible for outside groups running ads that support her nomination in Michigan. The claim that she is responsible for the action of an outside group is ridiculous, and the allegation that these ads are in some way a guarantee of how she will rule in the future is the most absurd thing I have heard based upon her answers to my questions.

I find it interesting that my colleagues who are complaining about conservative groups do not seem to have the same concern for groups on the left that are spending money in opposition to these nominees. One such group, Alliance for Justice, routinely issues reports and press releases on judicial nominees. Oftentimes, these so-called reports put forward incendiary and false criticisms of these nominees. My colleagues even make the same incendiary attacks against the nominees as these outside groups do. In other words, they use the same talking points. I do not hear that my colleagues on the other side are up in arms about their spending millions of dollars to oppose nominees.

Of course, some may remember that last year groups on the left coordinated attacks on this Senator. I was followed all over Iowa by these groups and their members. They ran ads against me and put up billboards that opposed my election, and that had something to do with the Supreme Court, as one might recall. I don't remember hearing any of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle complain about all of the money those groups were spending at that time.

As I have said before, I expect that outside groups on the left and on the right want to have their voices heard in the nomination process. Isn't that something to do with what we call democracy, representative government, freedom of speech, freedom of association? There is nothing wrong with that, whether it is done by the right or the left, but I take issue with complaints from the other side that do not acknowledge that all sides have interest groups that are spending and engaging in the judicial nomination process. It was completely appropriate for Justice Larsen not to wade in on the political debate regarding those political ads. Her answers to those questions were exactly what I would expect an independent nominee to say, particularly if she wants to be independent of any President who appoints her when she is appointed to the bench.

Justice Larsen's nomination is supported by a broad and diverse coalition of lawyers, judges, and academic colleagues. It is easy to see why, for she is an accomplished and well-respected academic. She is a brilliant and independent jurist. Her careful and well-reasoned legal analysis puts her squarely within the mainstream of legal thought. I urge my colleagues, in a few minutes, to vote for her nomination.

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 257 Ex.]

YEAS—60

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

NAYS—38

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

NOT VOTING—2

McCaskill	Menendez

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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 Allison H. Eid, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.
>
> Mitch McConnell, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, Pat Roberts, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, Patrick J. Toomey, John Barrasso, Cory Gardner, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, James E. Risch, John Cornyn, Lamar Alexander, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley.

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 Allison H. Eid, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I annouce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 258 Ex.]

YEA S—56

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

NAY S—42

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

NOT VOTING—2

McCaskill	Menendez

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 42.

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 Allison H. Eid, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to add my voice and my strong support for the confirmation of Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid as the next U.S. court of appeals judge for the Tenth Circuit Court, which, of course, is housed in Denver, CO.

There is no doubt that Justice Eid is superbly qualified for this position. For the past decade, she has served Colorado as a justice on the supreme court. In 2008, Justice Eid was overwhelmingly retained by the people of Colorado. We have a system where every decade the voters of Colorado vote to retain or dismiss a judge, and every time that has come before the people of Colorado, she has been overwhelmingly retained by the people of Colorado.

Prior to her appointment, Justice Eid represented the State of Colorado before the State federal courts as our State solicitor general. She served as a tenured member of the faculty at the University of Colorado Law School, where she taught courses in constitutional law, legislation, torts, and she has published scholarly articles on topics such as constitutional federalism and tort law, in addition to being a clerk on the Supreme Court. She also practiced commercial and appellate litigation at the Denver office of the national law firm Arnold and Porter.

She began her legal career as a clerk to Judge Jerry E. Smith on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Her law experience took her to the U.S. Supreme Court under Clarence Thomas. Prior to attending law school, Justice Eid was a special assistant and speechwriter for the U.S. Secretary of Education, Bill Bennett. She received her law degree from the University of Chicago Law School, where she was the articles editor of the Law Review. She graduated with high honors and as a member of the Order of the Coif. She received her degree in American studies from Stanford University, graduating with distinction as a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

What her resume clearly shows is that whatever Justice Eid does, she does it at the highest level, with the best results. She has specialized knowledge of federalism, water law, and Indian law, among other important areas of the law. Indeed, the National Native American Bar Association has even noted that she has ''significantly more experience with Indian law cases than any other recent Circuit Court nominee.''

We have had some pretty doggone good circuit court nominees in the past, including Justice Neil Gorsuch, whose seat she will be filling on the Tenth Circuit Court. These are concepts that are critical to my home State of Colorado, and her expertise will prove to be invaluable to the Tenth Circuit Court, as well as to the Nation and the people of this country.

But as impressive as her credentials are, it is her demeanor and her approach to the law that make her ideally suited for the court. Justice Eid has been called a ''mainstream, commonsense Westerner.'' She is also, as her former law clerks have noted, ''fiercely independent,'' and she will decide cases ''as she believes the law requires.'' At the same time, she seeks out different viewpoints and wants to understand all sides of the issue she addresses.

That is the law professor I know from my days at the University of Colorado School of Law. I can say from that experience that while Justice Eid has her perspectives on the law, she cares very deeply about robust debate and hearing the views of others. And I know from my classmates who had Justice Eid as their professor—those classmates didn't always agree with her perspectives, but Justice Eid was open to their debate and hearing their views. She engaged them, and she was never biased against differing perspectives but always applying the law as the law required, not as opinions suited.

I also know that ''fiercely independent'' jurist whom her former clerks spoke so highly of. Justice Eid will follow the law regardless of the popular wind, regardless of personal opinion. Whether considering the plain meaning of a statute, discerning the proper role of the courts, the legislative branch, or the executive and its agencies, or evaluating the relationships between the Federal Government and the States, Justice Eid will side with what the law says, and she will do it in that commonsense, western way that clearly and articulately tells the American people what the law is.

I am privileged to know Justice Eid. I have known her for a number of years now from my days as a student at the University of Colorado School of Law and through her work in the State of Colorado at the time that I served in the State legislature. She is an incredible human being with a delightful demeanor that will suit the court well.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD several letters in support of Justice Eid's nomination: a letter to Chairman GRASSLEY and Ranking Member FEINSTEIN from former law clerks of Justice Eid's, as well as a letter from various supporters in Colorado and one letter from the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

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

JULY 13, 2017.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY AND RANKING MEMBER FEINSTEIN: We are all of Justice Eid's former law clerks (except those currently clerking for a federal judge and not permitted to sign) since she began her tenure on the Colorado Supreme Court in 2006, and we write to give our fullest support to her nomination to be a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. We come from a diverse set of geographic, economic, cultural, and political backgrounds, yet we are united in our belief that Justice Eid is a jurist and a person of the highest caliber and character. We have each learned so much from her.

Justice Eid was raised by a single mother in Spokane, Washington under challenging circumstances, after her father abandoned her family. Justice Eid began college at the University of Idaho, but with the support and encouragement of her mother and a professor there, Justice Eid transferred to Stanford University where she graduated with distinction and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. After Stanford, she served as a speechwriter to President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, William Bennett, and then went on to attend the University of Chicago Law School, where she served as Articles Editor on the Law Review, graduated with High Honors, and was elected Order of the Coif. Justice Eid began her legal career as a law clerk for Judge Jerry Smith on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. She then served as a law clerk to Justice Clarence Thomas on the United States Supreme Court.

In private practice at Arnold and Porter following her clerkships, Justice Eid practiced both commercial and appellate litigation for a variety of clients. She departed private practice and joined academia where she became a tenured professor at the University of Colorado Law School, teaching Legislation, Constitutional Law, and Torts, and serving as the faculty clerkship advisor. During her time at the University of Colorado, Justice Eid continued her service in

the Colorado legal community as President of the Colorado Association of Corporate Counsel. In 2005 she was appointed by Colorado Attorney General John Suthers to serve as the Solicitor General of Colorado. One year later, Governor Bill Owens appointed Justice Eid to the Colorado Supreme Court where she has served for 11 years and was successfully retained by the voters of Colorado on a statewide ballot.

As law clerks we had the distinct privilege and opportunity to learn by observing Justice Eid throughout her decision making process. We learned that she never fails to provide her full attention and dedication to each individual case, mastering the relevant facts and carefully analyzing the law, whether the text of a statute or the words of a contract. As Justice Eid is so fond of saying, she ''goes where the law takes her.'' In other words, she treats each case individually without any preconceived notion of desired outcome.

As young lawyers, we took particular note of the respect that Justice Eid shows the parties and their attorneys both in her written work product and during oral argument. We also observed her belief in the importance of respect and collegiality with her colleagues, particularly during times of disagreement. Her chambers are always open, and she wants to hear different viewpoints (even ours), but she remains fiercely independent, ultimately deciding cases as she believes the law requires. And her opinions do just that—in clean and succinct prose, time and again, Justice Eid resolves the dispute between the parties and announces a clear rule of law that can be readily discerned by future litigants. Her majority opinions in particular are a testament to the care, dedication, and consensus-building attitude she brings to her role as a Judge.

While serving as a Justice on the Colorado Supreme Court, Justice Eid has continued to teach at the University of Colorado. She also serves as the Chair of the Supreme Court Water Court Committee, which works to identify rule and statutory changes to achieve efficiencies in water court cases, while maintaining quality outcomes for all. Justice Eid was appointed by Chief Justice John Roberts to serve on the Federal Advisory Committee on Appellate Rules—a prestigious appointment where she has served alongside federal judges, law professors, and lawyers to craft revisions to the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure—and by President George W. Bush to the Permanent Committee for the Oliver Wendell Holmes Devise (an organization that writes the history of the United States Supreme Court and sponsors the Oliver Wendell Holmes Lecture).

Justice Eid is active in her community and church, and as the mother of two children, Justice Eid has also been involved in her children's school over the years. In addition to her service on the Colorado Supreme Court, these other responsibilities connect her to the Colorado community, specifically the challenges and issues facing citizens of this State and will allow her to bring an important perspective and diverse set of experiences to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

Her qualifications to serve are unparalleled and speak for themselves. At each stage of her education and career Justice Eid has excelled at the highest levels and has received praise, awards, and the utmost respect of her colleagues and those who have worked for her. This is in no small part due to her incredible work ethic and her leadership by example. And we as law clerks have carefully observed and learned from her simultaneous and unfaltering commitment to both her family and her position on the Colorado Supreme Court.

We close by reflecting on our fond memories of our experiences as law clerks under Justice Eid, whether it was a lunch to celebrate a birthday, officiating numerous of our weddings, or the annual holiday and summer parties that she hosts. We all remember the genuine interest and support Justice Eid provided to us as people and new lawyers. We will never forget her heartfelt appreciation for our hard work and the care and time she has taken to guide us through our clerkships and beyond. She has been an important and steady mentor in each of our lives. We urge the Senate to take swift action on her nomination and are available to speak to any member or their staff about Justice Eid and her qualifications to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

Sincerely,

Marie Williams, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2006–07; Holly E. Sterrett, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2006–07; Jared Butcher, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2007–08; Clark Smith, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2008–09; Kate Field, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2009–10; Tim Zimmerman, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2010–11; Lee Fanyo, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2011–12; Jon Gillam, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2011–12; Jake Durling, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2012–13; Doug Marsh, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2013–14; Jamen Tyler, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2014–15; Ben Fischer, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2014–15; Chris Chrisman, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2006–07; Catherine Bazile, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2007–08.

Katie Yarger, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2008–09; Sara Rundell, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2009–10; Maranda Compton, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2010–11; Trina Ruhland, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2010–11; Victoria Cisneros, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2011–12/2012–13; Kate Cahoy, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2012–13; Lidiana Rios, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2013–14; Ayesha Lewis, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2013–14; Matt Mellema, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2014–15; Emma Kaplan, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2015–16; Julie Hamilton, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2016–17; Rob Rankin, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2016–17; Mairead Dolan, Clerk for Justice Eid, 2016–17.

JULY 27, 2017.

Re Support for the Confirmation of Justice Allison Eid to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

DEAR SENATORS BENNET AND GARDNER: As members of the Colorado legal community, we are proud to support the nomination of Justice Allison Eid to serve as a Judge on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. We hold a diverse set of political views as Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. Our practices range from litigation, including both plaintiffs' and defense work, to transactional work to administrative law to child welfare advocacy and from employment law to water rights and from government affairs to minerals development, immigration, healthcare, law enforcement, environmental justice, federal Indian law and civil rights. This incredibly diverse group of attorneys agrees on one thing: we all agree that Justice Eid is exceptionally well qualified and should be confirmed.

We know Justice Eid to be a person of integrity, professional competence, and judicial temperament. She has received the highest possible 'Well Qualified' rating from the American Bar Association. Her private practice work, scholarship, law teaching, and service as Colorado's Solicitor General have all demonstrated her superb abilities over many years. Her service on the Colorado Supreme Court has earned her a reputation as an excellent jurist. Her strong work ethic is renowned. She is a preeminent member of the legal profession, not only in Colorado, but in the United States more broadly, with outstanding legal ability and exceptional breadth of experience. We also know her to be a compassionate and caring person, deeply involved in the broader community and called to service, not only in her day job, but through her extensive volunteerism toward the betterment of the profession. Throughout her tenure on the bench, she has hired numerous diverse law clerks and continuously sought to ensure that the diverse voices of Coloradoans are heard, evincing a very strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. We are excited to see her bring her spirit and skill set to the Tenth Circuit.

We ask that Colorado's Senators join together and support this very highly qualified nominee from Colorado. We believe it is an exceptional moment to confirm Justice Eid as the first Colorado woman to serve on the Tenth Circuit.

Respectfully,

Sarah J. Auchterlonie, Franklin Azar, Naomi Beer, Michael Bender, Heath Briggs, Geraldine Brimmer, Scott Campbell, Richard Cunningham, Stanton Dodge, Caleb Durling, Jacob Durling, John Echohawk, David Fine, Jeremy Graves, Melissa Hart, Ellen Herzog, Neal Katyal, Martin Katz, Robert Kaufman, Kenzo Kawanabe, Kevin Kuhn.

Liz Krupa, Bradley A. Levin, Cedric D. Logan, Monica Loseman, Victoria E. Lovato, Rebecca Love Kourlis, Cynthia Mares, Michael E. McLachlan, Mary Mullarkey, Marc Musyl, Habib Nasrullah, Chris Neumann, Neil Oberfeld, Angelica Ochoa, Michael O'Donnell, Michele On-ja Choe, Peter Ortego, David Palmer, Joseph A. Peters, Richard Petkun, John Posthumus.

James Prochnow, Lee Reichert, Harriet McConnell Retford, Tom Sansonetti, Cliff Stricklin, Trent D. Tanner, Robert S. Thompson, III, Lorenzo Trujillo, John Voorhees, John Wahl, Rebecca Watson, Dee Wisor, Jennifer Weddle, Kristin White, Heather Whiteman Runs Him, Evan Williams, David B. Wilson, Maureen Witt, David Yun, John Zakhem.

SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE,
Ignacio, CO, July 21, 2017.

Re Support for Confirmation of Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY AND RANKING MEMBER FEINSTEIN: The Southern Ute Indian Tribe is writing in support of the confirmation of Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Justice Eid's considerable qualifications for this prestigious appointment are not in question. As a Colorado Supreme Court Justice, Justice Eid has demonstrated expertise in a broad spectrum of legal matters including the field of federal Indian law. Justice Eid's judicial record evidences her understanding of tribal sovereignty and other matters that are acutely important to the Tribe. Because these matters are often resolved in the Supreme Court following a decision in a federal appellate circuit in the West, it is critical that the judges on those circuit courts possess a working understanding of Indian law issues. Because she is well-versed in the established principles of federal Indian law, as well as many other areas of the law, the Tribe supports the nomination of Justice Eid.

Sincerely,

CLEMENT J. FROST,
Chairman.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I wish to spend some time talking about a letter dated July 27, 2017. This letter was sent to me and my colleague, Senator BENNET from Colorado. This letter was titled ''Support for the Confirmation of Justice Allison Eid to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals,'' which I have

submitted for the RECORD, but I want to highlight some of the people who have signed this letter because when it comes to the courts and nominations, I think it is very important that we listen to the voices of those people who are closest to the court over which the nominee may be presiding. It is also important that those who are closest to a practicing lawyer provide their opinions of a lawyer who has been nominated for the bench who is not already on the bench.

In the case of Justice Eid's supporters, there is an incredible list of people from across the political spectrum—both sides of the aisle—supporting Justice Eid. Let me talk about a few of Justice Eid's supporters, because we will hear a lot of debate about groups who support or oppose Justice Eid, but the people who know her the best, the people who have practiced before her court, the people who have worked with her over the many years of public service that she has provided don't just fall on the Republican side of the aisle or the Democratic side of the aisle, the support she has gathered is from across the political spectrum.

There is Michael Bender, former Colorado Supreme Court justice; Justice Rebecca Love Kourlis, one of the most respected jurists in Colorado, who served on the State supreme court and is one of the most highly regarded justices not only in Colorado but across the country, quite frankly; Justice Mary Mullarkey. Justice Mullarkey is no longer on the Colorado Supreme Court, but she served as the chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court. She was appointed by a Democratic Governor. She is someone who believes Justice Eid would be an incredible addition to the court. There is Neal Katyal, a former Department of Justice civil servant for the Obama administration—a U.S. Solicitor General, in fact. If we look at the other supporters she has, we see that Melissa Hart, who has run for office as a Democratic candidate, supports the nomination and confirmation of Justice Allison Eid.

As you can see, the Tenth Circuit has an incredible nominee before it whom I hope this body will soon confirm. I urge my colleagues to move quickly during this cloture time so that we can actually approve somebody who I know will do an outstanding job. I urge their support. I hope we will do our duty under our Constitution to select those people who will be guarding the Constitution and do it in a way that we can all be proud of. That is why I support Allison Eid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today for the 184th time to ask us to at least wake up to our duty as a Congress to enact prudent policies to address the effects of climate change. The Presiding Officer is well aware of what Alaska faces from ocean acidification and ocean melting and sea level rise and all of that.

For the generations who will look back at this, I have tried in these speeches to chronicle the political tricks and bullying that have put Congress—the Congress of the United States—in tow to a massively conflicted special interest, such that we are incapacitated on this vital subject. The shamelessness of the fossil fuel industry and the spinelessness of Congress under its sway will provide a long lesson in modern-day corruption and political failure.

The Trump administration has been particularly loathsome, threatening the emissions standards for cars and trucks, pressing for the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, disbanding science advisory committees, lifting the moratorium on Federal coal leasing, trying to expand offshore drilling, and open national marine monuments and sanctuaries to energy companies. The Environmental Protection Agency is working to eliminate rules on the leaking and flaring of methane and has rescinded requirements for reporting methane emissions. The President has announced his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement.

One particular target of this corrupted administration is the Clean Power Plan, the 2015 EPA rule to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from American powerplants—a rule that many utilities and States supported. But it is the industry's bottom-dwellers who have the President's ear, and they want to undo even this flexible framework for meeting emissions-reduction targets.

When EPA balanced the costs and benefits of the Clean Power Plan originally, it offset things, like between $14 billion and $34 billion in health benefits in the form of preventive illnesses and deaths, against the costs of industry compliance.

The net benefits of the Clean Power Plan came out to between $26 billion and $45 billion every year.

So with its official proposal to rescind the Clean Power Plan, EPA administrator and fossil fuel operative Scott Pruitt had to cook the books to wipe out this public benefit. Here is how he did it. There were two tricks. One derives from the fact that harms, injuries, and losses caused by carbon pollution can take place many years after the pollution is emitted. In financial matters, future costs and benefits are balanced against present costs and benefits, using what is called a discount rate. It is more valuable to receive $1 million now than $1 million 20 years from now. That is the theory.

But even the George W. Bush administration recognized for healthcare rulemaking that ''[s]pecial ethical considerations arise when comparing benefits and costs across generations,'' and they urged care about using a discount rate when a rule is expected to harm future generations.

In 2015, the United States settled on a 3-percent discount rate to estimate the out-year costs of carbon pollution to society. Scott Pruitt jacked that up to a 7-percent discount rate so out-year harms, injuries, and losses would count for less. Mind you, our children and grandchildren will still suffer the exact same costs at 3 percent or at 7 percent. It is just that present-day polluters—Scott Pruitt's masters—get a way-big discount.

Pruitt's second trick is only to count the carbon pollution harm within our borders. You might say: That is OK; we are Americans, after all. But it is worth taking a look at what this rule does if all countries were to use it because there is a trick hidden in the middle of it. The fact is that we are harmed by other countries' carbon emissions, and they in turn are harmed by our carbon emissions. On the flip side, we harm other countries with our emissions, and they harm us with theirs.

There is a total amount of global emissions, and there is a total amount of global harm. If you call the total global emissions X and the total global harm Y, what happens when every country follows the Pruitt method of only pricing local emissions and local harms?

For purposes of illustration, let's say there are three countries in the world, and each emits one-third of the total carbon pollution and suffers one-third of the global harm from the collective global emissions. If each country only counts its own emissions and the harms only to its own country, guess what happens. All that cross-border harm never gets counted. It never gets counted. It disappears off the balance sheet. It vanishes into this trick of calculation. If you are the tool of the fossil fuel industry, how rewarding it must be to implement a trick that just vanishes so much of the fossil fuel industry's harm to the world.

In this hypothetical, how much harm simply vanishes? Two-thirds of it does. Two thirds of the harm simply vanishes, never to be accounted for—not in the real world. Nothing has changed in the real world. In this three-country hypothetical, the total emissions is still X and the total harm is still Y. None of that has changed. This Pruitt trick of accounting just wiped two-thirds of the harm off the books. A happy day for polluters, and a happy, happy day for the polluters' tool, for there will no doubt be rewards for implementing this trick.

Those fossil fuel industry bottom-dwellers no doubt think that this is pretty cute and that this is pretty clever stuff, indeed. There are high-fives in the corporate boardrooms that they have a tool in office who will pull such a trick of magical, vanishing carbon pollution harms. But the problem with these crooked little schemes is that the whole world is actually watching. Anybody can do the analysis that I just did and show that this is nothing more

than a trick, and sooner or later, consequences do come home to roost.

Out in the real world, the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati is buying up land in Fiji so it can evacuate its people there when rising seas engulf its islands and eliminate the nation. It is on its way to becoming a modern-day Atlantis, lost forever to the waves. You can replicate that risk along the shores of Bangladesh, Burma, Malaysia and the Maldives.

You can add in the risk of lost fisheries that left a country's EEZ for cooler waters. If you think that is just a hypothetical, ask Connecticut and Rhode Island lobstermen about their catch. Add in the expansion of the world's desert areas in the Sahel and elsewhere that forces farmers' crops and shepherds' flocks away from their historic homes.

Add unprecedented storms powered up over warming seas. As bad as things have been in Houston, Florida, and Puerto Rico, we are rich enough to rebuild, to throw billions of dollars at the problem, and we are. Other places do not have those resources. Without the help, imagine that suffering.

To those who will suffer in the future, what do we say? On that day of reckoning, on that judgment day, what do we tell all those people who suffered? Ha-ha-ha, do we say? We came up with this little trick that wiped most of your suffering off our books. We used a discount rate that discounted your suffering to virtually zero. Is that the kind of America we want to be? Remember the saying: The power of America's example is more important than any example of our power. Some example we would be, some city on a hill, if that was the way we behaved.

The natural world does not care about self-serving or ideological arguments. The natural world is governed by immutable laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics. Scott Pruitt's polluter-friendly mathematics just doesn't add up. As Michael Greenstone, an economist at the University of Chicago who helped develop the social cost of carbon, put it, Pruitt's plan was not evidence-based policymaking. This was policy-based evidence making.

There is enormous pressure in the Trump administration to get rid of the social cost of carbon. What is bizarre about the Trump administration is that they don't try to get rid of the social cost of carbon by getting rid of its social costs, by lowering carbon emissions, by addressing the harms that it causes. They try to get rid of the social cost of carbon by getting rid of the scoring mechanism that counts all of that. It is like saying: My team is winning because I tore down the scoreboard.

Well, no, the world is getting clobbered out there by carbon pollution and the climate change that causes it, and tearing down the scoreboard doesn't help change the game on the field. You cannot just cook the books and reduce the social cost of carbon.

For one thing, the social cost of carbon analysis is too well established in the honest world. Courts have instructed Federal agencies to factor the social cost of carbon into their regulations. States are using the social cost of carbon in their policymaking. Most major corporations, even ExxonMobil, factor a social cost of carbon into their own planning and accounting.

The social cost of carbon pollution is at the heart of the International Monetary Fund calculation, for which the fossil fuel industry gets an annual subsidy in the United States of $700 billion a year. Even to protect a multihundred-billion-dollar annual subsidy, Scott Pruitt can't just wish the social cost of carbon away and just can't stop counting it. Courts will take notice.

They may take notice that these stunts are arbitrary and capricious under the Administrative Procedure Act. They may take note that Pruitt has massive conflicts of interest with his fossil fuel funders. They will surely note that the Supreme Court has said greenhouse gases are pollutants under the Clean Air Act, and that EPA is legally obligated to regulate them. They will surely note that the EPA itself has determined that greenhouse gas emissions endanger the public health and welfare of current and future generations, a determination that the DC Circuit resoundingly upheld.

But we are not in an ordinary situation. Pruitt has a long history of doing the bidding of the fossil fuel industry. In the recent Frontline documentary, ''War on the EPA,'' Bob Murray of Murray Energy, a strong Pruitt supporter, bragged about giving this administration a three-page action plan on environmental regulations and bragged that the first page was already done. That is the world we live in now, where the regulated industry brags that it controls its regulator, gives it direction, and that its work is already being done.

Courts that look at any rule proposed by Scott Pruitt must recognize that there is a near zero chance that he is operating in good faith. Our Nation's environmental regulator went in captured and has stayed captured by our Nation's biggest polluters. Scott Pruitt is not their regulator; he is their instrument. That is a conflict of interest.

I recently hosted my eighth annual Rhode Island Energy Environment and Oceans Day, bringing together members of our business community from the public sector, from government, and academia, to hear directly from experts about the latest environmental news and initiatives. I was very excited to be joined by excellent keynote speakers, including former Secretary of State John Kerry, who has done such magnificent work on oceans particularly but on climate change generally, leading us into the Paris climate agreement. Also, there was former U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern, who has labored in these vineyards so many years, and ocean advocate and Oceana board member Sam Waterston. They were all great, but one phrase stood out.

Sam Waterston called on us to tackle today's ocean and environmental problems with what he called a ''battle-ready kind of optimism''—a ''battle-ready kind of optimism.''

So let us go forward with a ''battle-ready kind of optimism'' to clean the polluter swamp at EPA, to clean our Earth's atmosphere and oceans of unbridled carbon emissions, and to clear the reputation of our beloved country of the obloquy it is rapidly earning at the hands of a corrupting industry.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). The Senator from Virginia.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the Children's Health Insurance Program. We all know that healthcare is the most important thing in any person's life and in their family's life, and there is probably no healthcare issue that is more intense than a parents' concern about the health of their children. I think all of the offices in this building have heard from parents about the health of their kids over the course of the number of months we have been debating what to do about the Affordable Care Act.

I rise today to talk about another critical program, which I hope we will act in a bipartisan way to reauthorize: the Children's Health Program, or CHIP. CHIP builds on Medicaid, and it gives families who earn too much to be eligible for Medicaid an insurance option for their kids. In talking to families who avail themselves of this option—in Virginia, years ago we didn't do a very good job of enrolling kids in CHIP, and we have become an awful lot better at it. It is interesting to hear the way parents talk about it. They will often talk about how important CHIP is to them when their child is sick or when their child is injured, but what is interesting to me is how important it is to them when their child is perfectly fine—not sick, not injured. But if you are a parent, you are going to have anxiety when you go to bed every night if your child doesn't have insurance or coverage: What if something happens tomorrow? This is a program that provides not just healthcare but peace of mind for parents and their kids.

Between Virginia's separate CHIP program and the Family Access to Medical Insurance Security and CHIP-funded Medicaid, the State provides coverage to nearly 193,000 children. CHIP alone—the specific CHIP program—covers 66,000 kids in Virginia and also pregnant moms; 1,100 pregnant moms are covered right now. The coverage is important. It includes doctor visits, hospital care, prescription medicines, eyeglasses—which are critical to being successful in school—immunizations, and checkups for kids up to age

19, with minimal cost sharing and without premiums.

In Virginia, since 2009, when I was Governor, we extended CHIP to also allow dental coverage. That has been really important to children and their families. The program is one of the success stories in this body because it has been strongly bipartisan in support since its creation in 1997. But as the President knows, this program expired on September 30. Despite bipartisan work on the Finance Committee, we still have not seen a reauthorization bill come to the Senate floor.

The uncertainty surrounding CHIP has already started to have an influence on my constituents and the constituents of every Member of this body. According to our Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, the State will be forced to send letters on December 1, 2017, notifying families that there is an impending loss of coverage. If there is not a reauthorization bill done by that time, imagine the anxiety of all these families in the weeks before Christmas getting a letter in the mailbox saying that this CHIP program, which covers 66,000 kids and 1,100 pregnant women, is about to expire. This will, at a minimum, cause a great deal of anxiety and confusion, even if we then come back and fix it. But if we don't fix it, obviously, the anxiety and confusion becomes much more catastrophic for the families.

After we send out letters on December 1 telling families that they have to prepare for the elimination of this program, enrollment will freeze on January 1. No new children can come into the program. By the end of January—and this differs in different States—Virginia will have insufficient funds to continue the program. There are some States that are already experiencing running out of the funds they have for the program. Virginia has a little cushion, but that will take us only through the end of January if we don't reauthorize.

Here is something that makes matters worse in Virginia, and I think it is the case in most States. Our legislature is a part-time legislature. The legislature is not in session. The legislature does not come back in until January, and that will make it really difficult. We can't find time for solutions before then because the legislature is not in session. When the legislature comes back, that would be a lot to face in 2 weeks, which is when this program is going to expire.

Needless to say, the kids who use CHIP in Virginia are in all parts of the State. Just to give you some examples, the Hampton Roads area, the second largest metropolitan area in the State—Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and the Northern Neck—has over 5,000 kids who rely on CHIP. In far southwest Virginia, where my wife's family is from—Appalachia—nearly 6,000 kids rely on CHIP. It is a high poverty area, and in those parts of the State where poverty is high, CHIP is used in a very important way by families. The Shenandoah Valley, an agricultural area in western Virginia, has about 6,400 kids who rely on CHIP. There is not a county, there is not a city in Virginia where there isn't a child and a pregnant woman who rely on this program.

On September 18—now to the good part of my talk, the positive words from my colleagues—Senators HATCH and WYDEN introduced the bipartisan Keeping Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure Act, which is a bipartisan compromise in the best traditions of this body, to extend the CHIP program for 5 years to give States sufficient time to plan their budgets and make sure that families don't face the uncertainty related to getting notice letters saying that the program may terminate.

I rise today to urge my colleagues to strongly support bringing this bill to the floor and providing certainty to the families and children who rely on CHIP. The possibility of all these families getting letters on December 1 saying that the program is possibly going to expire is just a needless uncertainty, and we should try to avoid that if we can, not just in Virginia but in every State.

My senior Senator, Mr. WARNER, is also a strong supporter of the program. I will give him some props. When he was Governor of Virginia—he preceded me as Governor—he was the one who focused on doing a better job of enrolling kids in the program. I give him credit for that, and I will take credit for my teamwork and for adding dental coverage to CHIP. But he was a great leader. He and I have together sent a letter to the Senate leader, Mr. MCCONNELL, asking if he would bring a bipartisan bill to the floor quickly on behalf of Virginia's children.

This bill was bipartisan in its introduction, and with the number of cosponsors and the historic, bipartisan nature of support for this program, if we can get a floor vote on this bill, I think we can pass it today and send it to the House and do so in a way that we would avoid the need to start sending out termination letters to families, needlessly increasing their anxiety.

I will conclude by saying that if we can bring this to the floor, I think we can get it passed. It is an urgent issue for children across the country—and even more than children in some ways. The children aren't wandering around every day thinking about their healthcare, but their parents are wondering every day, worrying desperately about their healthcare. This would be a bill that would help both children and parents.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, this week we are moving to confirm four Federal circuit judges. Because of that, it is a good week to talk about the critical role the judiciary plays and actually about the unique power our Constitution gave the courts to do the job they are supposed to do.

They are to provide a check and balance on the other two coequal branches of government—the executive branch and the legislative branch. Most importantly, the Federal judiciary provides Americans with an avenue with which to seek the rule of law, an avenue to know that one is going to be impacted by what the law says and what the Constitution says. It is a fundamental right of how we conduct ourselves, how we seek justice, how people should be able to make decisions about their families and about their businesses and about their financial futures as well as their personal futures.

That is why judges who believe in the rule of law and what the law says and what the Constitution says are so important and why it is important to have qualified and well-grounded judges—not just people who are really good lawyers but people who have an appreciation for how important it is that others can absolutely rely on the law and the Constitution. Those can be changed. There is a way to change them, but the way to change them is seldom on the Federal bench.

According to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, as of this morning, there are 148 vacancies on the Federal judiciary. That includes two vacancies on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. It includes the circuit judges of whose nominations we have not yet fully complied and approved this week, but there are 148 vacancies—jobs that are to be filled for as long as the people are able to serve. That is why healthy judges, younger judges, and judges who are well grounded can have such an impact for so long. The first major judicial accomplishment this year, in terms of the nominating process, was Judge Gorsuch, who 29 years from now will be younger than three of the judges with whom he is currently serving. These are decisions that will last well beyond a Presidency and well beyond the tenure of the Senators who will vote to confirm, and we have a chance to do that.

Of these judicial circuits, the Eighth Circuit is one my State of Missouri is in. As a matter of fact, the most recent data shows that while there are a handful of States in that circuit, one-third of all the cases that had been filed in the Eighth Circuit from September 2015 to September 2016 had come from our State, and I imagine that number will be about the same again this year. Reshaping the judiciary, generally, as well as what happens in the Eighth Circuit are important.

At the start of President Trump's term, 12 percent of all of the positions

in the Federal judiciary were vacant. The Congressional Research Service found that not since President Clinton took office has a President had the constitutional obligation to fill more judicial vacancies at the start of his term than President Trump. I, certainly, believe he made the right choice when he selected Judge Gorsuch to serve on the Court, and I have been enthusiastic about the other judges whom he has nominated, including the four we have had a chance to talk about and will continue to have a chance to talk about this week.

I think President Trump will continue to nominate judges who will, first of all, pay attention to the Constitution and what it says, who will apply the rule of law, and will not legislate from the bench. Those three hallmarks of how this Senate should define, and how this President has so far defined, what a judge is supposed to do not only can happen but can happen at this moment for—or at least as of January 20—12 percent of the judicial positions, and that number will continue to grow as judges, for whatever reason, leave the bench as judges decide to take early retirement. If at the end of the 4 years of this administration we have filled all of the vacancies that will have occurred, we will have filled more than 12 percent of those lifetime appointments. So it is really important that the Senate act to confirm these nominees and fill as many vacancies as are there to be filled.

Last month, the Federalist reported: ''Democrats are forcing more cloture votes than any early Presidency and demanding the full 30 hours of floor time per nominee that the Senate rules allow.''

Yesterday, at the press stakeout that we had outside of this room, I said that the Senate was designed to protect the rights of the minority, and that is a good thing. Just the fact that it would take 6 years to replace the entire Senate means that the country has to stay focused on one set of ideas if all of the Senators are going to reflect that one set of ideas much longer than the 2-year opportunity to change everybody in the House. Also, the understanding that the Senate provides that protection for minorities to be heard in a big and diverse democracy like we have is a good thing. In the points that we were making yesterday, I also said that the protections for the minority are always held onto, appreciated, and protected until the minority decides to abuse those protections. When that happens, the minority always loses the protection.

What we have had over and over again—47 times this year as compared to 1 time with President Obama for nonjudicial appointments, 5 times in the entire first Obama year up until this time in October, I believe, no times for either President Bush, and 1 time for President Clinton—is that the minority has taken a judicial nomination or another nomination and said we are going to insist on 30 hours of debate because the rules allow for 30 hours of debate. Well, the rules allow for 30 hours of debate for contentious nominees. The rules allow for 30 hours of debate when there is really going to be a debate. Last week, we had 30 hours of debate on a judge, but 20 minutes were spent talking in support of him while zero minutes were spent in opposing him. The 30 hours that could have been used for other purposes was gone.

Frankly, I think that was the reason the 30 hours was demanded—so the other work of the Senate had to be set aside so we could do the equally important work of letting the President put people in vacant positions that needed to be filled. That 30 hours will be changed if the minority continues to abuse it. It has happened in the entire history of the Senate, but that is what happens when you abuse these rules that protect you and give you rights. It will happen again here if this does not change.

We see the same thing happening this week. We have had lots of time this week—30 hours of debate, a final vote, and Democrats and Republicans vote. In fact, regarding the judge I mentioned a minute ago, 28 Democrats voted for that judge. There were 30 hours of debate, and not a single critical word was spoken in debate about the judge. A majority of the Democrats and virtually all of the Republicans voted for that judge. That is not an acceptable way to stop the Senate from getting to the other work the Senate needs to do. This is not basketball without a clock, where they used to effectively play the delay game. The delay game got abused, and the clock became part of the system. The clock will run faster here, too, if our colleagues do not begin to see the importance of what we do here.

NOMINATION OF DAVID STRAS

Mr. President, while these nominees have had cloture votes—again, President Obama, I think, only had one on a judge in his first year—there is one nominee, Minnesota Supreme Court Justice David Stras, in the Eighth District, which is the district again that Missouri is in, who has had his nomination held up. There is a rule sometimes that has been used in the Senate—almost always if a judge is being replaced that only affects your State—whereby a Senator can say: I am really opposed to that. In most of the history of the Senate, that kind of hold has been honored. It has not been honored on judges who represent another State, many States, or will be a judge in the circuit for many States just because they happen to come from your State.

The American Bar Association has said that Justice Stras is ''well qualified.'' It is its very highest rating. He received his bachelor's degree, with the highest distinction, from the University of Kansas, which is another State in this circuit. He received his MBA from the University of Kansas and his law degree from the University of Kansas. He clerked on the U.S. Supreme Court before practicing law and teaching at the University of Minnesota. Not only was he appointed to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court in Minnesota, but he was elected. In fact, he was elected and received more votes than the person who is holding his nomination received when he was elected to that job.

I urge my colleagues to not only support his nomination but to do what we need to do to get these nominees to the floor and let everybody express their opinion and be given the time needed to do that, not to continue to abuse the rules, not to continue to hold these important vacancies hostage to getting anything else done because we have 30 hours of debate in which nobody decides to come and debate.

By the way, if we want to continue to allow Senators to hold nominations in circuits that their States happen to be a part of, in the Eighth Circuit, most of the work before that court comes from Missouri more than any other State. We would be glad to have an additional judge, and there is nothing that would prevent that.

The right thing to do here is to let the nomination of a well-qualified person come to the Senate floor and be debated, if there is debate to be had, and be voted on and to take one of those significant 140-plus vacancies on the Federal judiciary and fill it with a person who is well qualified, just like this week. In four other circuits, we intend to put three women and one man on those courts who will hopefully be able to serve long and well and will take their important philosophies to the courts with them when they go.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, thank you.

As we heard my colleague from Missouri saying, we have a great opportunity this week to confirm four outstanding individuals to the Federal circuit courts. These nominees are well-qualified individuals who have demonstrated a strong understanding of the proper role that a judge plays in our constitutional system.

I am especially pleased that we are considering three exceptionally talented women for the Federal bench. Federal circuit court nominations are extremely important. Circuit courts sit directly below the Supreme Court in our judicial system. Because the Supreme Court reviews relatively few or a smaller number of cases, many times the circuit courts have the last word in the majority of those cases, so it is essential that we have judges on the circuit court who will treat all litigants fairly.

When I think about what I want in a judge, I think fairness is the first thing that comes to mind. We want someone who treats litigants fairly, who shows respect for our Constitution, our statutes, and the controlling precedents.

We need somebody knowledgeable in the law. That sort of goes without saying but certainly is a top attribute of a judge. Every party before our Federal courts has the right to expect even-handed, fair judges and fair justice from those judges who are handling their case.

Each of the four nominees being confirmed this week have a strong record and impeccable qualifications. They respect the rule of law. All were given a high rating by the nonpartisan American Bar Association.

Yesterday I was very pleased to support Amy Barrett's confirmation to the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Despite obstruction by my colleagues on the other side, I am pleased that yesterday we confirmed Ms. Barrett, but I still have deep concerns about some of the debate and some of the questions that were raised about her religious beliefs throughout the confirmation process.

The Constitution clearly states that there can be no religious test for any Federal office. The Senate has a responsibility to consider qualifications and fitness for office of individuals nominated by the President, but that does not include an evaluation of a nominee's religious beliefs. Our Constitution fundamentally protects religious liberty for all Americans. That principle is deeply rooted in our Nation's history and allows individuals of all faiths the freedom to exercise their religious beliefs.

Ms. Barrett's credentials clearly demonstrate her ability to serve on the Federal bench, which she will be doing, and I hope future nominees are questioned by this body on their record, their qualifications, and their jurisprudence, not on their faith.

Today we confirmed the nomination of Michigan Supreme Court Justice Joan Larsen for the Sixth Circuit, a supremely qualified individual. A former clerk for Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, she served as a Deputy Assistant Attorney General and as a law professor at the University of Michigan before joining her State's highest court, the supreme court.

We are now considering the nomination of Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid for the Tenth Circuit. Justice Eid served as Colorado's solicitor general and is a law professor at the University of Colorado. She clerked for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and was appointed by Chief Justice John Roberts to serve as a member of the advisory committee on Federal appellate rules.

Finally, we will consider the nomination of Stephanos Bibas to the Third Circuit. Mr. Bibas is a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania and clerked for Justice Anthony Kennedy after earning degrees from Columbia, Oxford, and Yale.

This is a supremely qualified slate of nominees, as their impressive credentials make clear. My colleagues who are familiar with these nominees have given praise to these nominees in earnest and honest discussion, which very much lends itself to my support. Without question, their fitness for the Federal bench is evident.

The fact that Democrats have been holding up these qualified individuals is totally misguided. We heard from Senator BLUNT in his remarks about the numbers. There are currently 21 circuit court vacancies and 120 district court vacancies in the Federal judiciary. While the Senate has an important role in examining nominees to fill these vacancies, Democrats have required virtually every potential judge to go through a time-consuming floor process that is simply not sustainable, even when there are no objections raised against the individuals. In fact, Democrats have used political tactics to delay virtually every one of President Trump's judicial nominees, controversial or not.

Every Senator has the right to vote against a judicial nominee if they believe that person to be unfit or unqualified—we all have that right—but engaging in a de facto filibuster against virtually every judicial nominee is an abuse of the rules, I believe, especially when the nominee has overwhelming bipartisan support.

The American people expect the Senate to confirm well-qualified nominees. They also expect us to advance a legislative agenda that will improve our economy and our security. By filibustering against qualified nominees, Democrats are keeping the Senate from tackling our important legislative work.

Starting with Justice Neil Gorsuch to the nominees being considered this week, President Trump has nominated mainstream judges who will serve our country for years in the judiciary. I commend the President, the chairman, Senator GRASSLEY, and the members of the Judiciary Committee for their work in advancing these talented individuals. We should confirm these judges and act promptly to fill other judicial vacancies.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, tomorrow morning the Senate will vote on the nomination of Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid. She is going to be voted on to serve on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. She is an eminently qualified and exceptional nominee who has received widespread, bipartisan praise and support.

Justice Eid has spent over a decade on the Colorado Supreme Court. Before her appointment, she served as the Colorado State solicitor general. In that role, she represented the State before both Federal and State courts. She also served as a tenured faculty member at the University of Colorado School of Law, where she taught courses in constitutional law, legislation, and torts. Justice Eid practiced commercial and appellate litigation at Arnold and Porter. At the beginning of her legal career, Justice Eid served as a clerk for Judge Jerry Smith on the Fifth Circuit and as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

Justice Eid was raised by a single mother, whom Eid credits for her significant personal and professional achievements. She earned a scholarship to Stanford and graduated with distinction and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Justice Eid received her law degree from the University of Chicago, where she graduated with high honors and Order of the Coif. She has had an impressive legal career, and she has an impressive life story.

In her long and celebrated tenure on the Colorado Supreme Court, Justice Eid has heard roughly 900 cases and written approximately 100 opinions. In 2008, 75 percent of Colorado voters retained Justice Eid to the Colorado Supreme Court.

Her nomination has also received wide, bipartisan support. As an example, Justice Eid's former clerks, who noted that they ''come from a diverse set of geographic, economic, cultural and political backgrounds,'' wrote a letter to the Judiciary Committee supporting her nomination. Judges work closely with their law clerks every day. Law clerks understand a judge's deliberative process and approach to the law better than anyone. How did these clerks describe Justice Eid? They said: ''She never fails to provide her full attention and dedication to each individual case, mastering the relevant facts and carefully analyzing the law, whether the text of a statute or the word of a contract.'' Her law clerks also wrote that she goes ''where the law takes her'' and that in their decade of collective experience in over 900 cases, Justice Eid ''treats each case individually without any preconceived notion of desired outcome.''

The National Native American Bar Association also endorsed Justice Eid. In their letter to the committee, they noted that she ''has demonstrated deep understanding of Federal Indian law and policy matters, as well as significant respect for the tribes as governments. Such qualities and experiences are rare among nominees to the federal bench.'' They went on to note that ''while we do not expect that Justice Eid will agree with tribal interests on every issue, we also believe that she is immensely well qualified and we are confident that Justice Eid is a mainstream, commonsense Westerner who will rule fairly on Indian Country matters.'' That is from the National Native American Bar Association. I think ''mainstream, commonsense Westerner'' is the perfect way to describe Justice Eid.

Despite this bipartisan support and her professional achievements, all the Democratic members of the Judiciary Committee voted against her nomination in committee, and I suspect most of the minority will vote against her

confirmation when it comes up. That surprised me. Justice Eid received a majority ''well qualified'' rating from the American Bar Association, an outside group who evaluates judicial nominees. My colleagues on the other side claim that this group's ratings weigh very heavily in their decision to support or oppose a judicial nominee. In fact, my Democratic colleagues claim that these ratings should carry a great deal of weight with Senators, and they argue that the Judiciary Committee shouldn't hold hearings on nominees who have not yet received ABA ratings.

This week, we are voting on four circuit court nominees—including three women—who received ''well qualified'' ratings from the ABA. The American Bar Association rated two of these individuals unanimously ''well qualified.'' Yet the vast majority of my Democratic colleagues voted against the two nominees on whom we have already voted, and I am willing to bet that the other two nominees will see similar opposition from my Democratic colleagues.

Why do my Democratic friends profess such admiration for the American Bar Association's evaluation process and then vote against nominees who received the American Bar Association's ''well qualified'' rating? I would like to see them put their money where their mouth is or maybe, better yet, their vote where their mouth is. If my colleagues believe so strongly in the ABA evaluations, they should start voting for nominees who receive ''well qualified'' ratings, but I suspect they will not.

When the Judiciary Committee voted on Justice Eid's nomination, my Democratic colleagues really stretched to find reasons to oppose that nomination. One of the chief reasons given for opposition to her nomination centered on a quote in a Denver Post article that said Justice Eid has ''earned a reputation of one of [the Colorado Supreme Court's] most conservative members.'' I find that statement to be misleading. Of the seven justices on the Colorado Supreme Court, Justice Eid is one of only two justices appointed by a Republican Governor. To argue that she is somehow extreme just because she was not appointed by a Democratic Governor is very unfair.

Furthermore, the Denver Post published a subsequent article that disagreed with this characterization. By contrast, the more recent article stated that ''appointment by a Republican or Democrat does not always dictate the ideology of the justice. . . . Even categorizing justices as either conservative or liberal is generally an error.'' I would agree with the Denver Post on this point.

Justice Eid should not be evaluated by her ideological reputation but, rather, by how she approaches issues before her judiciary. That is how I have evaluated Justice Eid and other judicial nominees, and that is why I strongly support her confirmation today.

I am very proud to support the nomination of Justice Allison Eid. She is the third in a series of distinguished female circuit court nominees we have had the opportunity to vote on this week. Her impressive experience and numerous accomplishments speak to her qualifications for this role. I commend the President for nominating these outstanding and accomplished women to our circuit courts. Justice Eid is an exceptional nominee, and her record overwhelmingly supports her nomination. As a result, I will support her confirmation tomorrow, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor and 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this week we have been talking about some sterling nominees for our Nation's circuit courts of appeals. These are our intermediate appellate courts in the country, one step above the trial courts where cases are tried and one step below the Supreme Court of the United States.

What most people don't realize is that the Supreme Court only decides roughly 80 cases a year. In other words, there is no guarantee that if your case is tried in the trial court, it will go beyond the circuit court of appeals. So in many instances, our circuit courts are the ''supreme court,'' or the court of last resort. These sterling nominees that the President has nominated include Professor Amy Barrett, who yesterday was confirmed to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals by a bipartisan vote of 55 to 43. For some reason, our friends across the aisle have decided it is to their advantage to inexplicably drag out the clock against a really accomplished scholar—and to boot, a mother of seven—but, of course, to no avail.

What is worse is our colleagues across the aisle have seemed to have forgotten some of their own priorities when it comes to judges. For example, the senior Senator from Minnesota has said in the past: ''It is time to get women on the bench.'' Well, we just did that yesterday, and we are going to do it again. ''They should get an up-or-down vote . . . that is what women deserve.'' I would say that is what the President's nominees—whether they be women or men—deserve, but, unfortunately, that hasn't always been the case.

There is still time, however, for our Democratic colleagues to honor their previous statements and to put more women on the circuit courts without needlessly stringing them along with unnecessary delays.

Joan Larsen was the first. She was confirmed earlier today. She fulfills the desire of the senior Senator from Vermont to ''confirm women practicing at the pinnacle of the legal profession.''

That is certainly where Joan Larsen works. She has been a justice on the Michigan Supreme Court and was nominated to the Sixth Circuit, which handles Federal appeals from Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee. Justice Larsen graduated first in her class from Northwestern University's law school. She then clerked for the prestigious DC Circuit Court of Appeals, right here in Washington, DC. She then went on to serve as a law clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Since then, she has worked in public service at the Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice during the George W. Bush administration and has taught at the University of Michigan Law School.

Both of our Democratic colleagues from Michigan have returned their blue slips, which is the piece of paper which says they are OK with the nomination going forward, signaling their approval. Given her credentials, my question would be, How could they not?

Ms. Larsen will make an excellent judge. She already has been, but she will make an excellent addition to the circuit court of appeals, and I am glad we have now confirmed her.

Another nominee is on the way. Justice Allison Eid of the Colorado Supreme Court has been nominated to the Tenth Circuit post formerly held by Justice Neil Gorsuch, who was recently confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Tenth Circuit sits in Denver and includes Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming.

As in the case of Professor Barrett and Justice Larsen, Allison Eid is exceptional in every respect. She attended Stanford University and the University of Chicago Law School, where she was elected to the Order of the Coif and graduated with high honors. She clerked for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans and then went on to clerk for Justice Clarence Thomas on the U.S. Supreme Court.

As with Justice Larsen, Justice Eid has received the blue slips from both of her home State Senators, which means they are willing to let this confirmation go forward. So I look forward to her quick confirmation.

Finally, the fourth judge who will be confirmed this week is professor Stephanos Bibas, who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He has been nominated for the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Stephanos Bibas was educated at Columbia, Oxford, and Yale Law School. He, likewise, clerked for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and then went on to clerk for Justice Anthony Kennedy on the U.S. Supreme Court. He has worked both in private practice and as a prosecutor. Now he

has distinguished himself as an academic, teaching and publishing in the realm of criminal law and procedure.

In their ringing endorsement of his nomination, a diverse group of more than 100 law professors noted Professor Bibas's ''fair-mindedness, conscientiousness, and personal integrity.'' Those are the sort of qualities we should all want in a circuit court judge.

We are going to confirm Stephanos Bibas and the other nominees I mentioned, no matter how long it takes, this week. The majority leader has put our friends across the aisle on notice, and there is nothing they can do to stop those confirmation votes before we call it a week.

Once again, the administration has demonstrated its skill at picking bright nominees for the right reasons. This week's nominees will read the law faithfully. They will honestly interpret its text, and they will apply it to cases with a sense of humility no matter what their preferred outcome might be.

I appreciate President Trump, Leader MCCONNELL, and the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, for the hard work in bringing these nominees to the floor. Now let's get them on the Federal bench.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, the other issue I wish to bring up in my remarks today is tax reform, because we all know that the House of Representatives will release the Ways and Means Committee's beginning bill for tax reform—something we have promised for a long time and that the country is anxiously awaiting.

This will be the culmination of months—if not years—of hard work, of meetings, white papers, listening sessions, and the like so that we can deliver on our shared goal of a simpler, fairer tax system that boosts jobs and puts more money in the pockets of every American. Those are our goals.

We know that many hard-working Americans have had a rough time in recent years. Sending their kids to college and securing retirement seems to be harder and increasingly out of reach for some of my constituents back in Texas and people around the country. I hear about their concerns and their anxieties—economic anxieties—every time I go home. It is not acceptable that 50 percent of Americans are finding themselves living from paycheck to paycheck and that a third of voters are one trip to the mechanic shop away from a household financial crisis.

Last week, several of my colleagues and I sat down with the President—we were members of a bipartisan group of the Senate Finance Committee—and discussed our objectives in achieving meaningful and lasting changes to our Tax Code. The President agreed that we should cut taxes for hard-working Americans and that we should nearly double the standard deduction, which reduces the number of people who will have to itemize deductions on their tax return, thus, making compliance with the Tax Code much simpler and cheaper. We agreed that we would significantly increase the child tax credit and reduce taxes on businesses and job creators.

This last objective—reducing taxes on businesses and job creators—deserves a little bit more discussion.

Ireland represents an interesting point of comparison for the United States. We have the highest tax rate in the world—35 percent for businesses that do business all around the globe. Ireland has a corporate rate of 12.5 percent. That is 35 percent to 12.5 percent. Because of that, it has become a haven for large American companies, especially in the high-tech sector.

Ireland has since ended its so-called ''double Irish'' tax scheme, which allowed it to benefit from taxes on income that should have been taxed in the United States. In other words, there is some rivalry and competition when businesses do business worldwide as to where their profits will be taxed. We want to make sure that those profits are taxed in the United States and not in countries abroad, where we would enjoy no benefit from.

This example illustrates what happens when we keep our tax rate so high. Sadly, companies leave. They go elsewhere, because they know that the difference between a 35-percent tax rate and a 12.5-percent tax rate in Ireland may be the difference between making a profit for your shareholders—whether it is the teachers retirement system or the firefighters pension fund—or ending up in the red and not making a profit at all. Savvy companies will leave, and they will go elsewhere. They know to create new entities and search the globe for better rates. It is really a matter of their competitiveness in a global economy.

Of course, when they do this, it is legal. It is rational because they want the best deal they can get for their shareholders. They also want to make sure they can achieve a profit for their shareholders and not a loss, frankly, due to the differential in tax rates.

When companies dodge U.S. taxes, it means we here in the United States miss out on revenue that we would otherwise reap. One thing is for sure. With $20 trillion in debt, we want to make sure that our Tax Code is fair and simple and is competitive and will help us grow our economy in a way that will help us pay down those deficits and that debt.

Now, our Democratic friends have been known to demagogue this issue a little bit, saying: Who wants to cut these corporate tax rates overseas? Corporations shouldn't get a tax cut, even though they know what the facts are.

Well, they should simply listen to people like Barack Obama. In 2011 he was speaking to a joint session of Congress and called on Republicans and Democrats alike to lower the U.S. corporate tax rate because he knew—and he was right—that this was hurting our global competitiveness in a global economy and that companies, out of sheer self-interest, were keeping the profits they had earned overseas rather than bringing them back and suffering from double taxation, meaning that workers here in the United States didn't get the benefit of that infusion of extra cash in their paycheck, and the investment that should occur here in the United States was occurring overseas strictly because of our Tax Code.

My colleague, the senior Senator from Oregon, described corporate inversions. That is what happens when an American company shifts its legal address to a foreign country, such as Ireland, for tax purposes. He called it a ''contagion'' that has affected the Tax Code with ''the chronic diseases of loopholes and inefficiency.'' He went on to call the Tax Code an ''anti-competitive mess.'' He is right.

The senior Senators from Maryland and Ohio have also made similar statements in past years.

We all realize that simplifying our Tax Code will reduce tax compliance costs, which currently run for small business owners at around $19 billion a year. Our Tax Code has simply gotten to be too complex and too convoluted for honest, law-abiding small business owners to do it on their own. So they have to hire somebody else to help them sort it out.

The less money that a small business pays in tax compliance is the more they can spend on their employees or on expanding their business or on investing in new equipment or simply giving their workers a pay raise. Let's give them the relief that they need. Let's reduce the corporate rate, as President Obama and our colleagues on the other side used to argue for. With our proposals, we can also get moving on fixing the rest of the Tax Code to let the hard-working people of Texas and American families keep more of what they earn, improve their standard of living in the process, and to make our Tax Code more competitive in a global economy so that businesses that operate internationally will be incentivized to bring that money back here to the United States to make and manufacture products that are stamped ''Made in America'' and to improve the wages and quality of life and income of American workers. It just strikes me as a no-brainer, and that is exactly what we are going to set out to accomplish to.

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

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, thank you.

FREEDOM TO NEGOTIATE

Labor unions and strong labor laws have helped build the middle class in America and protect the rights of workers for generations.

In the 1970s, union participation was around 30 percent, and it was a golden era for the American middle class. Wages went up. Families had benefits and vacations. Parents could pay for college. They could put food on the table and have money left over. The vast, thriving middle class was built on the blood and sweat of labor unions and those who organized the labor unions, often at their physical peril, back in the thirties.

Unfortunately, over the last few decades, union membership has declined and, along with it, middle-class wages and opportunities. In the seventies, union membership was near 30 percent, but it had fallen to just 11 percent of all workers by 2014. That decline is mostly because the union movement and, concurrently, the middle class, with which it is allied, have been under attack from big corporate special interests and the conservative movement for the better part of the last three decades. It is well funded by a small group of very rich and, I might say, greedy people, and it is patient.

Their goal is to, by any means necessary—Congress, the courts, whatever—break up existing unions and prevent new unions from forming. They will pursue any avenue in order to disrupt the ability of workers to organize and collectively bargain for a fair share of the profits they create so that they can make an extra buck.

These forces will do whatever it takes to keep rigging the system in their favor, like asking the Supreme Court to rule on Janus v. AFSCME, a case backed by the Koch brothers—$40 billion each, maybe more; plenty of money—but they hate giving any money to workers. And there is no record evidence of a single lower court ruling in its favor.

If anyone doubts the politicization of the Supreme Court, just look at their being willing to hear this case twice, which comes with a crazy legal theory that a First Amendment basis should be used to destroy collective bargaining. It is merely designed to eliminate the freedom of people to come together in unions. If the Supreme Court endorses the arguments of Janus, it will be a dark day for the American worker.

Chief Justice Roberts, who said he would be fair and call balls and strikes, in my view, has lost all pretence of fairness. He wants to keep the Court nonpolitical, but he keeps pushing cases like this. Since his confirmation, under Chief Justice Roberts, the Court has methodically moved in a pro-corporate direction in its constantly and consistently siding with the big corporate interests over the interests of workers. Already, it has been the most pro-corporate Court since World War II. A decision in favor of Janus will be a shameful capstone on that already disgraceful record.

I would say to all of those wealthy people who have plenty of money and to all of those corporate executives who get paid in the tens of millions, who are desperate to take money away from middle-class people whose incomes are declining, that you are creating an anger and a sourness in America that is hurting our country in so many different ways.

American workers deserve a better deal, and Democrats are going to offer it. We are calling it freedom to negotiate. We are offering the middle class, and those who are struggling to get there, a better deal by taking on companies that undermine unions and underpay their workers, and beginning to unwind a rigged system that threatens every worker's freedom to negotiate with their employer.

Our plan would, among other things, strengthen penalties on predatory corporations that violate workers' rights; ban State right-to-work laws that undermine worker freedoms to join together and negotiate; strengthen a worker's right to strike for essential workplace improvements; and provide millions of public employees—State, local, and Federal—with the freedom to join a union and collectively bargain with their employers.

Over the past century, labor unions have fought to stitch into the fabric of our economy a basic sense of fairness for workers. Each worker left on his or her own has no power against the big corporate interests that employ them, but together unions and workers who unite in unions can have some say.

No one taught me better about the lack of fairness than a 32BJ worker I met several years ago at the JFK International Airport, who was named Shareeka Elliot. When I first met Shareeka, she was a mother of two children who was struggling to make ends meet. She was working the graveyard shift cleaning the terminals at JFK and serving hamburgers at McDonald's during the day. She was forced to rely on public assistance since she had gotten so little in wages from those jobs. She lived in a house with six other family members to be able to pay the rent. She was not a freeloader. She was working two jobs, but she got minimum wage and could hardly support herself. She barely saw her children and spent most of her free time in getting to this job—this poorly paid, minimum wage job. She had to take a bus for 2 hours from East New York to the JFK International Airport.

She was not angry, by the way, as she was a churchgoing lady. She had faith in God to provide, but she suffered so.

By the way, 30 years ago, if you had cleaned bathrooms at an airport, you would have been employed by the airlines or by the terminal. But because these companies have learned to farm out the labor to subsidiaries, to franchises, and to other corporations that have no accountability, now cleaning those toilets is a minimum wage job.

Over the last 4 years, though, I have seen Shareeka and her coworkers start to rebuild their dreams. She said to me: Senator, if I only could get minimum wage, I might be able to take my kids out to a restaurant—I never could—or buy them toys for Christmas. I never could do that.

Shareeka joined the union, and they fought for a $15 minimum wage. In some parts of the country, that may seem like a lot of money. In New York City, I can tell you that it does not go that far. Costs are higher. Shareeka was able to quit her second job and spend time with her daughters, like all parents want to do. Shareeka and her coworkers won a union contract, and now they are able to gain the tools they needed to protect themselves and do their work in a safer environment.

Shareeka is a metaphor for ''American workers,'' so many of whom have lost good-paying jobs that have gone overseas or that have been closed due to automation. When they organize in these new types of jobs, they can get the kinds of wages people used to get in the jobs that have gone away.

It is pretty simple: When workers have the freedom to negotiate with their employers, they have safer working conditions, better wages, and fairer overtime and leave policies. Shareeka's story is a testament to that fact.

Our better deal, the freedom to negotiate, will do for so many Americans what Shareeka's union did for her in New York. It will turn things around for our country. Maybe middle-class wages will start going up, and maybe people will start having faith in the future again. We Democrats—hopefully, maybe, joined by a few courageous Republicans—are going to fight to get it done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague Senator BROWN for leading the effort on the floor to speak out against the latest attacks on union rights that are in front of the Supreme Court right now. I am very proud to join him to highlight the contributions unions have made to our middle class, to the economy, and to our country. I want to express my commitment to stand up against any attempts to undermine workers' rights to join a union and bargain collectively.

Since day one, President Trump has broken his campaign promise, which was to put our workers first, by rolling back worker protections and putting corporations and billionaires ahead of our working families, and now we are seeing corporate special interests doubling down on their attempts to undermine the rights of workers to band together. So it is critical now more than ever that we are committed to protecting our workers and their ability to advocate for safe working conditions, better wages, and a secure retirement.

Unions helped create the middle class in this country and helped a lot of our families in the last century become financially secure. But over the last few decades, as workers' bargaining power and union density have declined, we as a country have seen a decline in the middle class and a rise in income inequality in this country. As we all know, too many families today are struggling to make ends meet. Meanwhile, corporations' profits are at an alltime high.

I will continue to fight back against any attempts by this administration and by special interests to rig the rules against the people who go to work every day. I will keep fighting for policies that will help families save just a little more in their bank account, whether it includes raising the minimum wage or fighting for equal pay for equal work or strengthening our workers' rights to seek out and join a union and bargain collectively. I urge all of our colleagues who want to help working families to get ahead to join me in that effort.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I am here to speak out in favor of working families and how we can empower American workers to obtain good jobs, to secure a safe retirement after a lifetime of hard work, and to give them the freedom to join together to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.

Unions in the United States are important for our families and for our Nation's economy. Organized labor is one of the greatest forces driving the middle class, which is especially important for our veterans and members of the military. Union jobs help provide our servicemembers and veterans with the economic opportunities that they have earned. Union jobs help working moms and dads put food on the table, and union jobs help power the engine of our economy—our middle class. That is why I am working every day to protect the rights of working people and why I stand shoulder to shoulder with organized labor.

We must work together to combat the assault on the protections that workers have fought so hard to secure. It is more important than ever that we here in Washington work to expand economic opportunity for hard-working Americans, many of whom come from a union home. That means passing labor law reform to make it easier, not harder to join a union. That also means expanding the use of project labor agreements for major construction projects and opposing efforts to repeal prevailing wage laws. It also means defending the Davis-Bacon Act. The Federal Government can and should be a model employer that encourages companies to pay fair wages.

It is important to note the great progress that collective bargaining is making for all people. More families today have two working parents than ever before, and women's growing role in our unions have increased to nearly half of the labor workforce. In Illinois alone, 44 percent of union workers are women. The labor movement, which had a pivotal role in creating national minimum wage, the 40-hour workweek, overtime pay, and standards for workplace health and safety, is now also impacting women workers and their families in a significant way.

The collective voice that working Americans have is responsible for improving sick leave and paid family leave policies at the State and local levels. These efforts can also lead to reducing our Nation's long-lasting wage gaps between gender and race. Labor unions tend to raise wages and improve benefits for all represented workers, especially for women, and women of all major racial and ethnic groups experience a wage advantage when they are in a union. There is still a long way to go in the wage gap fight, but unions are leading the way to make those gaps smaller.

Unfortunately, organized labor is under attack. In Illinois, the anti-union surge is on the rise. Nationwide, so-called right-to-work efforts are growing. We need to be clear on one thing: These laws do absolutely nothing to strengthen workers' rights, despite their misleading names and rhetoric.

Make no mistake, opponents of organized labor are well funded and relentless in advancing union-busting campaigns. We must work together and challenge these growing dangers to America's middle class.

The U.S. Supreme Court will soon decide a case that could determine the future of American unions. A slim majority of conservative Justices may hand down an anti-worker decision that would dramatically undo existing precedent and sabotage the ability of unions to effectively represent hard-working, everyday Americans. Workers should not be able to reap all the benefits of union negotiations while refusing to pay dues that made those efforts possible. Make no mistake, a decision sanctioning this practice would strip away freedom from millions of Americans. It would steal their freedom to join together to bargain for better wages, it would steal their freedom to join together to insist on worker protections, and, ultimately, it would betray middle-class America, which relies on organizing to effectively negotiate with powerful corporations.

Another way we can support our union workers is by making a serious investment in our Nation's infrastructure, which leads to more good-paying jobs and greater economic opportunity for working families. Improving our Nation's infrastructure is really just common sense. That is why I introduced a bill, which was passed into law, to cut redtape and reduce delays on construction projects in Illinois and our surrounding States. Upgrading our transportation systems will help Illinoisans and all Americans who depend on our roads and transit systems to get to work every day, as well as businesses that need our airports, highways, and our freight network to ship their products.

I am working each day to support our hard-working, middle-class families. Through organizing, unions have become champions for working families both in and out of the Federal Government.

I thank our union representatives for all the work they do for our families, our communities, and our Nation.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, last year, powerful corporate interest groups actually stole a Supreme Court seat and handed it over to their handpicked choice, Neil Gorsuch. Now those powerful corporate groups are about to use that seat to deal a devastating blow to hard-working teachers, firefighters, nurses, and police all across this country.

On September 28, the Supreme Court announced that it would hear a case called Janus v. AFSCME Council 31. AFSCME 31 is a union representing public sector workers in Illinois. This case will determine whether the public sector unions that represent teachers, nurses, firefighters, and police officers in States and cities across the country can collect fees from all the employees in the workplaces they represent.

Many expect that Justice Gorsuch will deliver the deciding vote in that case, that he will force unions to represent employees who do not pay dues and, in doing so, cut off sustainable funding for public union organizing.

Judges are supposed to be impartial, but there is no reason to expect that Justice Gorsuch will be impartial in this case. On the afternoon of September 28—the very same day that the Supreme Court announced that it would hear the Janus case—Justice Gorsuch attended a luncheon at the

Trump International Hotel. And he didn't just attend an event at a hotel that makes money for the President. Nope. He gave the keynote speech for a rightwing group funded by one of the Koch brothers and by the Bradley Foundation—billionaires and wealthy donors who are pumping money into the people behind the Janus case.

It is no surprise that these rich guys want to break the backs of unions. After all, unions speak up, unions fight back, and unions call out billionaires who rig the system to favor themselves and to leave everyone else in the dirt.

What is at stake in the Janus case is basic freedom—the freedom to build something strong and valuable, the freedom to have a real voice to speak out, the freedom to build a future that doesn't hang by a thread at the whim of a billionaire. And just as the Supreme Court decides to take up a decision that puts the freedom of millions of working people in jeopardy, Justice Gorsuch shows up as the star attraction for a billionaire-sponsored outing to celebrate an organization that is sponsoring an operation to put workers' freedom on the chopping block.

With this kind of brazen disregard for fairness and impartiality, it is no wonder that Gallup Polls have found that fewer than half of all Americans approve of the way the Supreme Court is now handling its job. In a shameless decision to abandon even the appearance of neutrality, Justice Gorsuch makes it clear that he is on the attack against American unions and American workers.

In the Trump administration, workers have been under repeated attack. Since taking office, President Trump has signed several laws sent to him by the Republican Congress, laws that directly undermine the wages, benefits, health and safety of American workers. In just 10 months, they have rolled back rules designed to make sure that Federal contractors don't cheat their workers out of hard-earned wages. They have delayed safety standards that keep workers from being exposed to lethal, carcinogenic materials. They have given shady financial advisers more time to cheat hard-working Americans out of billions of dollars in retirement savings, and the list goes on.

This is a democracy, and in a democracy, the government in Washington is supposed to work for the people who sent us here. So why is it that the Federal Government seems to be working against the interests of 150 million Americans who work for a living? Well, there is one reason—money.

Money slithers through Washington like a snake. Its influence is everywhere. There are obvious ways that we know about—the campaign contributions from giant corporations and their armies of lawyers and lobbyists—but it is also the think tanks and the bought-and-paid-for experts who are funded by shadowy money, whose point of view seems always to help the rich and powerful get richer and more powerful.

Powerful interests invested vast sums of money in electing President Trump, and with each of his anti-worker actions, their investments are paying off. Powerful interests also spent vast sums of money to push Federal judges who will tilt our courts even further in favor of billionaires and big businesses.

They did it when they spent millions of dollars to hold open a Supreme Court seat for over a year. They did it when they spent millions more to promote Neil Gorsuch to fill that seat. Now that the Court is poised to deliver a massive blow to public sector unions and workers, their investment is paying off big time.

The stakes here couldn't be higher. Millions of teachers, nurses, firefighters, and police officers are looking to the Court for a fair hearing of the case. They are holding out hope that their freedom to come together and to stand up for themselves in the workplace, their freedom to fight for higher wages, their freedom to fight for more generous benefits, and their freedom to fight for a better future for themselves and their children will be preserved.

Unless we make real change, working people are just going to get kicked again and again, and we can make change. We can make the change right here in Washington. We can stand up and fight for our democracy, and we can start by demanding that everyone in our government is accountable, including the President of the United States and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. I also ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, 40 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that nonunion public workers who benefit from the work conducted by a union to negotiate contracts that they benefit from should have to pay a fee to cover costs associated with this work. If all workers benefit, it is only right that everyone contributes a fair-share fee.

However, in recent years, there has been a well-funded effort by special interest groups backed by corporate billionaires to dismantle unions and silence the voice of workers. There have been a number of attempts to overturn the 1977 decision in Abood v. Detroit Board of Education. Other efforts have targeted State legislatures where they have had success in many States. In other States like Pennsylvania, these efforts were blocked.

Workers already have the right to decide whether to join a union. They have the right to decide. It is common sense that if these workers benefit from the higher wages and better working conditions that result from contract negotiations undertaken by the union, that those workers should have to chip in for the cost of these negotiations. That is just fair. These negotiations get results and they benefit workers. They benefit workers who are in the union and benefit workers who are not in the union.

The right to bargain collectively has been an integral part of raising income and growing the middle class over the course of the last century. Being able to organize and bargain collectively allows workers to demand higher wages and salaries and of course boost their incomes. These workers have more money to provide for their families, to increase consumption, which in turn increases both production and employment. Putting more money in the hands of workers is good for workers and for the country.

Over the last several decades, we have seen the balance of power across our Nation tilt more and more in favor of the wealthy and the largest corporate interests at the expense of working Americans.

The Supreme Court has not been immune from this trend. Under Chief Justice Roberts, the Court has become an ever more reliable ally for big corporations. A major study published in the Minnesota Law Review in 2013 found that the four conservative Justices currently sitting on the Court—Justices Alito, Roberts, Thomas, and Kennedy—are among the six most business-friendly Supreme Court Justices since 1946. So four of the six most business-friendly are serving on the Court at the same time.

A review by the Constitutional Accountability Center—which is an ongoing review and is updated with every case the Supreme Court decides—shows the consequences of the Court's corporate tilt, finding that the chamber of commerce has had a success rate of 70 percent in cases before the Roberts' Court—a significant increase over previous courts.

These are all critical cases. These are cases of critical importance to everyday Americans. These are cases involving, for example, rules for consumer contracts, challenges to regulations ensuring fair pay and labor standards, attempts by consumers to hold companies accountable for product safety, and much more.

Well-funded corporate special interests do not have the best interests of working families at heart. They are pushing these efforts to reduce their bottom line by reducing the incomes of working families.

That is why we are standing today to make sure that the voice of working Pennsylvanians and Americans are heard. To increase incomes and strengthen the middle class, we need to

stop the assault on workers and labor unions, whether it happens in Congress or in State legislatures or, indeed, in the U.S. Supreme Court.

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

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in proud support of America's workers—the men and women who build our cars and our homes, who move American-made products across oceans, lakes, and highways, who teach our children every school day, who take care of our families when they get sick, and who keep us safe in our communities. I have seen firsthand the importance of unions, both in my home State, where I grew up, and across the country.

This is deeply personal for me. My father Herb was a public school teacher and an active member of the Michigan Education Association. My father-in-law Raul was a proud member—and continues to be a proud member—of the United Auto Workers.

My mother Madeleine found economic opportunity as a nurse's aide. As part of providing the best care possible to patients, she fought for a better workplace for her colleagues, and then she went on to help organize her workplace. She later served as a union steward with the SEIU.

My parents raised me in a middle-class, union household. They instilled in me the need, both, to stand up for rights and to never take those rights for granted.

Standing together for fair wages, safer workplaces, and better hours, Michigan's strong labor movement built the American manufacturing sector and a middle class that made the United States a global economic powerhouse.

My parents and their fellow union members embraced the union values that built Michigan: the ability to earn a good life where you grow up, hard work, fairness, and looking out for your neighbor—whether it is your neighbor on the assembly line or in your neighborhood. These are not just union values. These are American values, and I learned to cherish them at a very young age. Now, I am sorry to say, these values are under attack, and I can't help but to take it personally.

This year we have seen new and unprecedented attempts to undermine our Nation's workers and their ability to collectively bargain. Earlier this year, my Republican colleagues passed legislation to repeal Federal rules that simply required businesses to disclose previous workplace safety and fair pay violations before they could contract with the Federal Government. The reason for this rule was fairly straightforward: We should not be sending taxpayer dollars to employers that can't keep their employees safe or that cheat them out of their hard-earned dollars. Yet Republicans repealed the rule.

Now, across the country, we are seeing a wave of so-called right-to-work legislation, which in practice means you can work more hours for less pay. In Michigan we are seeing the impact of this misguided legislation.

Supporters of these policies told us that wages and job growth would increase if Michigan just passed laws to crack down on union membership. Well, Michigan has the law, but workers and their families aren't seeing any of the promised benefits.

In the years since passage of the law, the economic data clearly shows that, yes, corporate profits are up but not wages. In fact, when comparing Michigan to States that haven't attacked union membership, studies suggest that we have fallen behind pro-union States when it comes to worker pay.

I am deeply concerned by the ongoing efforts to implement national anti-union laws, including the Janus v. AFSCME case that the U.S. Supreme Court will rule on in the very near future. A negative ruling in this case would be a huge loss for American workers and would undermine the right to collectively bargain.

We should be doing everything we can to support American workers and their right to fight for better working conditions, fair pay, and the ability to care for their families. Instead of attacking our Nation's labor unions, we should be celebrating them.

For generations, unions have helped America build the world's most robust middle class and a powerful economy, second to no other nation. Unions have not only helped workers to take home more pay and have a safe place to work, but they have also built communities. Unions teach their members valuable skills and help them earn a secure retirement and have quality healthcare.

Big corporations are not trying to undermine unions because they are looking out for newly hired employees. They are fighting against unions because of what unions stand for—the right to collectively bargain for better pay, increased workplace safety, hard-earned retirement benefits, and quality healthcare.

I ask my colleagues to take a moment to consider our history and the hard-working men and women who built this great Nation of ours. Union members are our neighbors, our firefighters, our police officers, our teachers, our nurses, our brothers and sisters, our moms, and our dads. They build our cars, our homes, and our infrastructure.

I urge all of my colleagues to honor these men and women by opposing any and all efforts to expand harmful policies designed to undermine American workers.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleagues for joining me on the floor today to stand with American workers. We organized a group of close to a dozen Senators who have heartfelt and strong views about the dignity of work, who understand so well that workers are working harder and smarter but earn less and less money, in spite of their hard work, in spite of their commitment.

I have been joined on the floor already by Senator SCHUMER from New York, Senator MURRAY from Washington State, Senator DUCKWORTH from Illinois, Senator WARREN of Massachusetts, Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania, and Senator PETERS from Michigan, and speaking after I speak will be Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island and Senator MERKLEY of Oregon and Senator DURBIN of Illinois. I thank them for standing up for American workers.

People in Ohio and around the country, as I said, work harder, and they work longer than ever, but they have less and less to show for it. Over the last 40 years, GDP has gone up, corporate profits have gone up, executives' salaries have gone up all because of the productivity of American workers. Again, GDP goes up, corporate profits go up, executive salaries explode upward. Workers are more productive, but workers have not shared in the economic growth they have created. Hard work just doesn't pay off like it did a generation ago.

It is no coincidence that over that same timeframe, we have seen attack after attack after attack on the labor movement. Corporate special interests have spent decades stripping workers of their freedom to organize for fair wages and for benefits. The case the Supreme Court just agreed to take up, Janus v. AFSCME, is yet another attempt to chip away at workers' power in the workplace.

These are public service workers. These are public schoolteachers, librarians, police officers, school nurses, firefighters, and postal workers. They are not looking to get rich in these jobs. They are just looking to be paid what they earn, the same as any other worker in this country.

Make no mistake, an attack on public sector unions is an attack on all unions. An attack on unions is an attack on all workers, whether they belong to a union or not, and I mean all workers, whether you punch a timeclock or whether you fill out a timesheet or swipe a badge, whether you make a salary or earn tips, whether you are on payroll, a contract worker,

a temp, working behind a desk, cutting hair, working on a factory floor, or working behind a restaurant counter. I mean all workers.

The fact is, all workers across this country—as profits go up, as GDP goes up, as executive compensation goes up, as workers get more productive, all workers across this country are feeling squeezed. Work doesn't pay off the way it used to.

We have seen what happens when workers have no power in the workplace. Increasingly, corporations view American workers as a cost to be minimized instead of a valuable asset in which to invest.

Look at the news we got last month. This piece of news, when I mention this to some of my colleagues, when I mention it around the State of Ohio, peoples' mouths drop. The Bank of America, Merrill Lynch downgraded the fast food restaurant Chipotle because the company pays its workers too much.

Remember what happened with American Airlines a few months ago. American Airlines announced it was doing a companywide pay increase, and the stock market punished them by knocking their stock down. Imagine that. So when a company wants to do the right thing, Wall Street says: No, you are not going to do the right thing. Wall Street is saying: We want all the money. Don't give any of this money to workers—workers making $10 or $12 or $15 an hour. Think about that. Wall Street and Merrill Lynch didn't say they paid their workers too little, they paid their workers too much. That is why the labor movement matters.

Pope Francis spoke about how unions perform ''an essential role for the common good.'' He said that the labor movement ''gives voice to those who have none . . . unmasks the powerful who trample on the rights of the most vulnerable workers, defends the cause of the foreigner, the least, the discarded.''

I just had the pleasure, for the last few minutes in my office, to speak with Bishop Murry of Youngstown, OH, and we were talking about the Pope and about steelworkers in Youngstown and about the struggles of workers and wages and layoffs and all the things that have happened to—where the winds of globalization have buffeted the workers in that community. Bishop Murry, as does Pope Francis, understands what too many in this town don't; that workers feel invisible, entire communities feel invisible. They feel like they are getting used and abused and some other words I can't say on the Senate floor.

What, exactly, is the point of creating economic growth if workers don't share in it, if ordinary families still can't get ahead?

Everybody here loves to talk about tax reform and bring the corporate rate down, but nobody is talking about paying workers more or giving workers more job security or what we should be doing—in working with companies and creating good jobs.

My legislation, the Patriot Corporation Act, says if corporations do the right thing—if they pay their workers well, if they pay benefits, if they do the kinds of things American corporations should do—then they get a lower tax rate because they have earned it.

We seem to have forgotten that all work has dignity. We have forgotten, as the Pope said, that ''the person thrives in work. Labour is the most common form of cooperation that humanity has generated in its history.'' Think about that. ''Labour is the most common form of cooperation that humanity has generated in its history.''

What Washington and Wall Street don't seem to understand is that workers drive our economy, not corporations. You focus on the middle class, you grow the economy from the middle out, not cut taxes on the richest people and expect the money to trickle down into more money in workers' pockets and more people are hired. You grow the economy by treating workers well, by investing in workers. That is why we need unions to ensure that we spread economic growth to the people creating it, to the people working too many hours for too little pay.

I think about workers like Stephanie in Columbus. She has worked for 25 years as a childcare attendant for students with special needs. She wrote, saying: ''Every day I wake up before the sun rises to prepare for three daily shifts aiding students with special needs on their way to and from school.''

That is the person whom—because she belongs to a union, that is the person whom corporate America, that the rightwing of the Republican Party wants to attack? That is the kind of person—Stephanie in Columbus—they want to attack?

She worries that cases like this that undermine her union ''could severely limit our voice on the job and hurt our ability to best serve the children we care so much about.'' She said: ''Unions provide a pathway to the middle class for all people.''

Think about a janitor I met in Cincinnati. I was speaking at a dinner. There was a table down front with seven middle-age women—a pretty diverse group. There was one empty seat at the table. It was told to me by some others that this group of women were janitors, custodians in downtown Cincinnati, southwest Ohio, and these women had signed their first union contract with downtown Cincinnati business owners. So there were 1,200 janitors working in these downtown businesses—in these big buildings downtown—and they had signed their first union contract.

I asked if I could sit at their table, and they said yes. I said to the woman next to me: What is it like to have a union?

She said: I am 51 years old, and this is the first time I will have a 1-week paid vacation in my life.

Think about that. We don't think—I am guessing that most of my colleagues think: Well, you know, people have paid vacations and people have paid sick leave. Well, much of the country doesn't, No. 1; and No. 2, those who do often have that because they had a strong union—a union that negotiated sick leave pay for them, a union that negotiated vacation days for them, a union that negotiated family leave for them, and then, when those workers at a company get it, the other nonunionized workers and companies get it, and then those companies compete with other companies.

So the fact is—there is a bumper sticker that says: ''If you enjoy your weekend, thank a labor union.''

Labor unions brought to this country things like weekends and more leisure time and decent pay and all that. That is why unions matter. That is why this decision in the Supreme Court matters.

If the Supreme Court rules against AFSCME, it will starve the union for resources they use to organize and grow and advocate for more workers. At the risk of being disrespectful, it would be nice if those nine members of the Supreme Court would follow the admonishment of Pope Francis, the words of Pope Francis, who admonished his parish priests to go out and smell like the flock. Find out where people live and work. Find out what people do.

Find out the living conditions of people.

Abraham Lincoln in the White House one day was talking to his staff. His staff said: You have to stay here in the White House. You have to win the war. You have to free the slaves. You have to preserve the Union.

Lincoln said: No, I have to go out and get my public opinion baths.

It could be important if the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court—who has an Ivy league education, went to the best colleges and the best law schools, grew up in a wealthy family, has done very well as a professional, and is a very smart man—if he would go out and smell like the flock, if he would go out and get his public opinion bath, maybe he would hear some stories, as I have heard in my time in the Senate.

He would hear stories from people who talk about how important it is that Stephanie has union protection. He probably has never really thought much about the fact that janitors, who have worked 30 years as janitors—35 years for some of those women—but never had a paid day off, never had a paid vacation. He might learn something from them and think a little differently about this.

If the Supreme Court rules against AFSCME, it is the opposite of what we need. We should be making it easier, not harder, for workers to come together and negotiate. That is why, this week, I am introducing legislation to strengthen the National Labor Relations Act, to make it harder for employers to deny workers the freedom to collectively bargain by playing games with their job titles and classifications.

Instead of stacking the deck even further in favor of corporate CEOs, we need to make it easier for workers to organize. That is how we make hard work pay off.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, the Janus decision coming up in the U.S. Supreme Court, which Senator BROWN has just spoken about, is one that merits the attention of people who are concerned about the country and the Court.

I wish to make two points in my remarks. The first has to do with the very difficult to explain—or at least very difficult to comfortably explain—pattern of 5-to-4 decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, in which the five consist entirely of Republican appointees.

The Supreme Court makes a lot of decisions, of course. But there is something that is particularly interesting about the 5-to-4 decisions, where the five Republican appointees line up and roll the other appointees. When we start looking at those decisions, there are some really significant patterns that emerge. The first pattern goes to issues in which the court is treading into the world of politics.

Bear in mind that when Sandra Day O'Connor left the Court, it lost its only member who had ever run for office. What Justice O'Connor left behind was the first Court in the history of the United States that had exactly zero experience with elections and politics. There has never been as ignorant and green a Court in the history of the United States when it comes to politics; yet there has rarely been a Court so flagrantly eager to jump into politics and make very consequential decisions.

When we look at the 5-to-4 decisions—which I think are probably the bulk of those—each one aligns with the political interests of the Republican Party—each one. It is not one or two or even three. It goes on and on and on.

The oldest one in the series is probably Vieth v. Jubelirer, which was the decision in which the five Republicans said: This whole gerrymandering thing is just too difficult for us. We are going to declare open season. There is going to be no judicial remedy. We can't figure out one, so we don't have one.

It is not just me who is saying that. The ABA section on election law said in its volume: Look, basically, it is game over for court review of gerrymandering. What immediately happened after that was the Republican Party went to work with that greenlight signal and did the REDMAP project, which created massive, bulk gerrymandering through the battleground States. This was not an easy plan because, in some cases, they had to spend millions of dollars to win one or two State legislative seats, so they could then control the State legislature, so they could then change the districts consistent with the bulk gerrymandering scheme.

The result is what happened in States like Senator BROWN's, where, when he was reelected, he was on the ballot with President Obama, who was also reelected, and the majority of the votes cast in his State for Members of Congress were cast for Democrats, but against that background, many more Republicans than Democrats actually went to Congress in that election.

A similar thing happened in Pennsylvania. My recollection is that on the same set of facts, Senator CASEY, a Democrat, was reelected; President Obama, a Democrat, was reelected; a majority of Pennsylvania votes were cast for Democratic Members of Congress; the delegation was 13 Republicans and 5 Democrats. Somebody is messing around, and it was a 5-to-4 Republican Supreme Court that opened that can of worms and unleashed REDMAP on the political landscape.

They have a chance to review that now. Senator MCCAIN has written a bipartisan brief asking them to wake up and smell the coffee about what has gone wrong here. We will see if they do or not, but, clearly, that was a decision that benefited the Republican Party's polls, and, clearly, it was 5 to 4.

Then you go to the Voting Rights Act cases. There were two of them. In the first one, Bartlett v. Strickland, the five Republican members teed up a new standard, which they mentioned, but they didn't really act on it. Then, when it came to the home run pitch, Shelby County v. Holder, they created this new theory about which very conservative judges, like Posner, said that, basically, it stands on thin air. It has no basis whatsoever in any real legal theory. They knocked out the part of the Voting Rights Act that requires States with a wretched history of abuse of minorities and Democratic voters at the polls to get preclearance from the Department of Justice or from a court before they can change their State laws to scare people or keep people away from the polls.

With that knocked out, guess what. All these legislatures across the South went straight to work. They passed law after law after law to deny people access to the polls, and over and over again, the courts that reviewed those and the appellate courts that reviewed the district court decisions found that the laws had been intentionally discriminatory, that the legislature had intended to keep people away from the polls, that they had intended to discriminate against Democrat and minority voters, and that they had chosen to do that deliberately.

Of course, you can go back after all that litigation and clean it up and try to get the laws stricken and all of that. But in the meantime, you have had election after election in which the effect at the polls was had.

They couldn't have been more wrong about the notion that if you lifted the preclearance requirement, everybody was going to be fine. Those were just the bad old days; it was a whole new America; racism didn't exist; efforts by one party to keep the other parties away from the polls weren't anything to worry about. Move along, move along; nothing to see here, folks. They were just plain dead wrong. They had absolutely no clue, and they have been proven dead wrong since. But, again, both of those cases were 5 to 4, all Republicans together.

Then, of course, the big whammy came when the big special interests that so often are the core backers of the Republican Party decided that they felt really constrained by having to live under campaign finance limits. They wanted to be able to spend unlimited money in elections. Well, that is fine. It reminds me a little bit of the story of the French philosopher who touted the majesty and equality of the French law, which forbid both rich and poor alike from sleeping under bridges and begging for bread. Well, guess who actually sleeps under bridges and begs for bread. It is not rich and poor. And guess who can take advantage of a rule that you can spend unlimited money in politics. Only those who meet two conditions: One, they have unlimited money to spend, and, two, they have a good reason to spend it. In other words, really big special interests.

The Court's decision, presuming that this spending was going to be either independent or transparent, has been turned into a mockery by events since. They obviously did not know what they were talking about. Facts have borne out that they did not know what they were talking about. They were completely dead wrong.

Interestingly, since then, despite the presumption of their decision having been cut completely out from underneath it, the Court has shown no interest in a correction. They have shown no interest in correcting their error. They seem completely happy, the 5 to 4—the five Republican appointees—completely happy to have the landscape of American politics polluted with this money.

There again, it wasn't just one decision. It was a bunch of them. Citizens United was the big one; Tradition Partnership, Inc. v. Bullock another; McCutcheon v. FEC yet another; Davis v. FEC yet another; Arizona Free Enterprise Club's FreedomClub PAC v. Bennett yet another—all 5 to 4, all the Republicans lining up, all throwing out precedent or laws that had stood for 100 years.

So Janus fits right into this pattern of 5-to-4 decisions. Indeed, it is actually a little bit worse because something weird happened early on when one of those 5 to 4—the Republican five Justices on the Supreme Court—signaled to the corporate supporters of

this ideology that he was interested in taking a whack at unions in a particular way.

There is a pet peeve of the union-busting rightwing and the corporate sector, which was a decision from 1977 called Abood v. Detroit Board of Education. That decision allows unions to collect some dues from nonmembers on the grounds that their work for their members has benefit to other members. So you break out their wages work, which helps everybody, from their political work, which you can disaggregate from, and it allows you to collect certain dues—not complete dues, but certain dues—from nonunion members. What Abood did was to help unions keep revenues from the service that they give to nonmembers who benefit from their work. Without that rule, employees would be encouraged to be free riders and just get the benefit of what the union is doing without making any contribution to support it whatsoever. Of course, if that were to happen, the balance of power between corporations and unions would shift further toward corporations.

The story is told quite well in the New York Times by a reporter named Adam Liptak, who is a Supreme Court reporter. I will read his story.

In making a minor adjustment to how public unions must issue notifications about their political spending, Justice Alito digressed to raise questions about the constitutionality of requiring workers who are not members of public unions to pay fees for the unions' work on their behalf. . . . Justice Sonia Sotomayor saw what was going on. ''To cast serious doubt on longstanding precedence,'' she wrote in a concurrence, ''is a step we historically take only with the greatest caution and reticence. To do so, as the majority does, on our own invitation and without adversarial presentation is both unfair and unwise.''

Michael A. Carvin, a leading conservative lawyer, also saw what was going on. He and the Center for Individual Rights, a libertarian group, promptly filed the challenge Justice Alito had sketched out.

I would say that he had invited.

Indeed, Mr. Carvin asked the lower courts to rule against his clients, a Christian education group and 10 California teachers, so they could high-tail it to the Supreme Court.

Let me interrupt my reading of the story for a second and make the point that this lawyer wanted to lose his case in the lower courts. It is rare for lawyers to go into a court wanting to lose. You have to have kind of a weird motive to take a case into court that you want to lose. The obvious motive here is that Mr. Carvin had heard the signal from Justice Alito that he was willing to rule his way if he would just bring the right case. So it didn't matter whether he won or lost. Losing is actually quicker. It gets you right up to the Supreme Court. He is not interested in litigating the matter truly on the merits; he is only interested in getting as quickly as possible to the Supreme Court. Why? Because he knew that 5 to 4, he would get the right decision.

When you are a lawyer, the most sickening feeling you can have is to go into court with the belief that the judges you are going to argue before are prejudged against you. The confidence that Carvin must have had to want to lose a case deliberately below so that he could hightail it at high speed up to a court that he knew was going to rule his way because they told him they would—that is not American justice in the way it should be delivered.

As it turned out, they took up the case. It was called Friedrichs. It was going to be 5 to 4, just as expected, and then Justice Scalia unexpectedly passed away. If you read about how the press took that, it was very clear that the fix had been in on this case.

''Corporate America had high hopes,'' the Journal said, because ''the Supreme Court appeared poised to deliver long-sought conservative victories.''

Since when should a court be poised to deliver long-sought conservative victories, not fair, dispassionate adjudication? But that is the reporting of the friendly Wall Street Journal. And those long-sought conservative victories were going to take the form of '''body blow[s] that business had sought against consumer and worker plaintiffs.' The cases 'had been carefully developed by activists to capitalize on the court's rightward tilt.'''

Come on. This is not adjudication any longer; it is just the exercise of political power. And these 5-to-4 partisan decisions by the Supreme Court are degrading the reputation of the Supreme Court, they are degrading the integrity of the Supreme Court, and they are degrading the role of the judiciary in our vaunted scheme of constitutional government in the United States of America.

With that, I yield to my distinguished colleague from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, our Nation was founded on a powerful principle encapsulated by the first three words of our Constitution: ''We the People.'' We are meant to be a nation, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, ''of the people, by the people, and for the people,'' not a nation by and for the most powerful, not a nation by and for the most privileged. Yet time and time again, we are seeing a complete and total corruption of the vision of our Constitution.

We saw this earlier this year with one TrumpCare bill after another designed to rip healthcare away from 20 to 30 million Americans to deliver tax giveaways to the richest in America. We have seen it just recently in the consideration of a budget that reversed that and said that in order to give $4.5 trillion of tax giveaways almost entirely to the richest Americans, we will take $1 trillion out of Medicaid and half a trillion out of Medicare. We have seen this powerful conversion of standing our Constitution on its head, and now we have the Supreme Court fully participating in this effort in a case called Janus v. AFSCME. It is the very epitome of the principle of a nation so corrupted that it honors the opposite of what our Constitution stands for.

The sole purpose of this case, Janus v. AFSCME, is to undercut the ability of workers to organize. This is an assault on the freedom of working Americans to associate with their coworkers. It is an assault on the freedom of working Americans to negotiate a fair wage. It is an assault on the freedom of Americans to fight for fairer benefits and a safe workplace. Bottom line: It is an assault on the freedom of workers to participate in the wealth they work so hard to create.

In short, this is the right to exploit that our Supreme Court—majority of five—is so determined to elevate. I have read the Constitution, and I have never seen embedded in it a right to exploit, a right to cheat, a right to take advantage of. Yet here is the majority of the Court prepared to fight for exploitation on behalf of the 1 percent of Americans at the very top.

The key strategy in this case is to attack the finances of workers when they organize. Former President Jimmy Carter once said: ''Every advance in this half-century—Social Security, civil rights, Medicare, aid to education, one after another—came with the support and leadership of American labor.'' It has been workers banding together to say: We can create a better foundation for families to thrive. And that hasn't just created a better foundation for those who belong to unions; it has created a better foundation for all workers. We saw them successfully band together and fight for a 40-hour workweek, fight for minimum wage, fight for sick leave, and fight for healthy and safe working conditions—again, benefits that every worker enjoys because workers were able to organize and fight to receive and win these provisions.

What is really going in the Janus case? Any organization, in order to function, has rights and responsibilities. Rights are the rewards you get for participating, and responsibilities are the requirement that you be part of the team and you contribute to the effort.

When I was small, probably just 2 or 3 years old, my mother had a book she would read to me that involved the animals in the barnyard. Animal after animal was asked to participate in making the bread, and animal after animal turned it down, but when the bread was baked, they wanted a full share even though they had refused to participate in the effort to create it. This is what Janus is all about. It is about the right to the rewards, divided from any responsibility to get the work done.

When workers organize, they say: We are going to have to be able to have the finances to drive this organization, and to do that, we need to have every worker contribute a fair share. Those fair share fees mean that all the workers

are in it together, they are all contributing, and they all benefit from the rewards.

Forever, the courts have said: Yes, with the reward goes the responsibility. That is true of any organization. It is fundamental in how organizations work. If you don't show up here on the floor, you don't get to vote. Every organization has its responsibilities that go with its rewards. But the 1 percent have chosen a strategy that says: We will take one organization in America—and that is workers organizations—and we will drive an absolute wedge between the responsibility and the reward.

These fees that we are talking about, these fair share fees, are not fees that go to political purposes. They don't go to donations to candidates. They don't go to organizing campaigns walking door-to-door for candidates. They don't go to advertising on the television or the web. They are simply the cost of having a team that works to negotiate an agreement with a company.

I find it absolutely evil that a majority of the Supreme Court is excited about embracing this right to exploit other workers by saying in this one case in America, you get the rewards without the responsibilities. If the Court was applying that to a stockholder in a company, the equivalent would be to say that the stockholder doesn't have to contribute to the costs of the management of the corporation, so they can demand back their share of what the management spends on their salaries, on their office spaces, on their private jets, and on their trips to do whatever they do, of the time they spend negotiating acquisitions to build the size of the company or striking deals to sell their products. That would be the equivalent, that a stockholder gets the rewards of all of that negotiation without having to participate in the cost. But this is not a situation in which five Justices want to apply consistent principle because their goal isn't to honor the Constitution, and their goal is not fairness; their single goal is to demolish the ability of workers to organize, to get a fair share of the wealth they work to create.

We can see that already our Nation is in trouble on this principle. For the three decades after World War II, we had workers who had the strong ability to organize and demand a fair share, and we saw a revolution in the prosperity of workers in those three decades from 1945 through 1975. Individuals who had lived in shacks, individuals who had been wiped out by the Great Depression suddenly were able to buy, on a single worker's income—it didn't even take two incomes—a three-bedroom ranch house with a basement and a single-car garage and were still able to save money for an annual camping trip and perhaps to save some to help their children launch themselves into life. That is what we had when workers got a fair share.

Yet, in the midseventies, the multinational companies said: Do you know what? Let's undercut the American worker by making our goods overseas in China and importing them. That way, we will demolish the jobs here in America, and we, the company, will have made things at the lowest price in the world, have sold them at the world market price, and have made a lot more money. This strategy worked for the multinational companies. They made vast sums of money for their stockholders and for their executives.

This application of different rules for foreign workers and domestic workers really gave a huge advantage to our competitor overseas and to a company that spanned both shores and could move its production overseas. So we saw the loss of 50,000 factories; we saw the loss of 5 million factory jobs; we saw the loss of an enormous number of supply chain jobs; and we saw, without those payrolls being spent in the community, an enormous loss of retail jobs in the community, but it made the wealthy wealthier, and that was the goal of the strategy.

So here we are, facing this case that will come before the Court later this year, but the members of the Court have, essentially, already declared their positions. Four members of the Court were on the previous version of this when the Court tied 4 to 4, and Neil Gorsuch, who was added to the Court, has been very clear on which side of this he stands.

Should we put an asterisk by Neil Gorsuch's name? Should a 5-to-4 decision, with Gorsuch being in the majority, even carry weight here in our society? This is the seat that for the first time in U.S. history was stolen from one President and delivered to another. The majority of this body right here stole the seat, undermining the integrity, dishonoring the oath, the responsibility for advice and consent, and damaging the legitimacy of the Supreme Court. It was done because it was a strategy to enable the 1 percent to rip off ordinary working Americans. The prize for that was a position on Citizens United that now allows the wealthiest Americans to continue to fund campaigns across this country to drown out the voices of ordinary people and a position on this case, the Janus case, that says that we will take one organization in America, that of the workers, and divide the rewards from the rights.

We know who is behind this strategy. It is the Koch brothers through their organizations, the National Right to Work Foundation and the Liberty Justice Center. They were behind the strategy for the theft of the Supreme Court seat. They were behind the massive increase in third-party spending that polluted the campaigns across this country. They are behind this strategy to destroy the vision that is embedded in our Constitution.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said: I am opposed to this legislation because it gives employers the right to exploit. Eleanor Roosevelt was a real champion for workers, and she called a spade a spade. The right to exploit is not a right that any Member of this body should pursue, and it certainly should not be pursued by the Supreme Court.

We know that there is a chapter 2 to this strategy. The first is to get the Supreme Court so that you can divide the rights from the responsibilities; therefore, you as a worker do not have to contribute to the cost, but you will benefit from the rewards. Pretty soon, very few people will be contributing; therefore, it will undermine the financial ability of the union to negotiate.

Then they have a second strategy. This fundraising letter was sent out last year by the State Policy Network. By the way, the State Policy Network is an alliance of 66 State-based think tanks that are designed and funded by the Koch brothers and their friends to undercut the ability of workers to get a fair share of the wealth that they create. They said: Here is our plan to defund and defang our opponent, the unions—to deal a blow to the left's ability to control government.

Ah, they are fancy words, but what they really meant was our goal is to take and undo the ability of workers to organize so as to get a fair share of the wealth they create. It is one evil act after another that is funded by the Koch cartel.

In our Nation, we have stood up to this type of abuse time and again. The American historian who created the phrase the ''American dream'' said, in each generation, there is a group of Americans who rises up to take on the forces that appear to be overwhelming us. We need to call on the people of the United States who believe in the vision of our Constitution, to be that group to rise up and take on this effort to turn our Constitution on its head—to strip ''we the people'' out of our Constitution and replace it with ''we the powerful''—and to stand up against this type of right to exploit, whether it is a bill here on the floor of the U.S. Senate or it is a begotten majority of the Supreme Court.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am not the first guy to stand up here and make this observation, but I have serious concerns with how the nominee confirmation process has been going in this Congress.

There is a blatant lack of respect for the Senate nomination process and an unprecedented level of obstructionism. I have been here for a number of years, so I know what to compare it with. I have never seen so many people being delayed in their confirmations, knowing that they are, ultimately, going to be confirmed and that they are well-qualified civil servants.

The Democrats are forcing cloture votes on nominees who have well over 60 votes in support. Last week, we held a cloture vote on Scott Palk. Scott Palk is from Oklahoma. He is a guy who everybody likes. He doesn't have

any enemies out there. In fact, he was actually nominated by President Obama. He was not even nominated by this President. He ended up getting 79 votes. Still, the stall was there, and we had to wait and wait and wait. Meanwhile, things are not getting done that should be getting done. Furthermore, the agency positions that we have hardly ever held rollcall votes on are being forced to occupy floor time. There is no reason for these votes except to delay the work of the courts and our agencies.

I am very supportive of the leader's commitment to our courts and how he has prioritized judicial nominees. These nominations are extremely important and will ensure that the rule of law is upheld for, possibly, decades to come, benefiting all Americans.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

However, there is an Agency that is doing work that is also important to all Americans and needs appointments, and that Agency is the Environmental Protection Agency. If there has been one Agency over the last 8 years that has run around and expanded its authority beyond congressional intent, it is the EPA. Putting confirmed appointees in place at the EPA will allow the President and Scott Pruitt to be successful in their efforts to rightsize that Agency. He has talked about that quite a bit. It is a bloated Agency that needs to be rightsized, and he needs help to do that.

Last week, I highlighted the great things that Scott Pruitt is doing as Administrator. I was able to visit with him yesterday at the EPA and witness firsthand the implementation of new policies that will bring about positive changes in an Agency that has run roughshod over the American people. With the repeal of WOTUS and the Clean Power Plan, with the implementation of TSCA, in reforming the Agency by ending sue-and-settle processes, and by creating greater transparency on the EPA's Science Advisory Committee, he is really doing a great job.

By the way, yesterday, we had this event over there which had to do with the scientists. There are three Scientific Advisory Boards in the EPA. These are supposed to be made up of scientists who advise the policymakers as to what they are supposed to be doing. During the last administration, we discovered in just one of these that six out of seven of the appointees were actually recipients of grants from the EPA. In fact, I was over there, and I gave a little talk about those six. They actually received $119 million, and they are supposed to be unbiased in making policy. Obviously, this is one of the many things that he is going to make sure will no longer exist.

He is making it impossible for anyone who serves on a scientific advisory board to receive any grants from the EPA. How reasonable is that? Yet that is still a practice they use and one of the many things he is cleaning up there.

There is a lot of work still to do. The Agency needs its Assistant Administrators, who will work to implement many of the initiatives I have worked toward for years. The Environment and Public Works Committee has now voted out five Assistant Administrators and General Counsel nominees, and I hope we can move swiftly to get these well qualified nominees over to the EPA to bring their expertise to an Agency that desperately needs them. Unfortunately, Democrats have targeted two of these nominees and have disparaged them, their work, and their backgrounds.

NOMINATION OF DR. MICHAEL DOURSON

Dr. Michael Dourson will be an excellent Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention and will bring much needed expertise and experience to the office in charge of the TSCA reauthorization law. The TSCA bill was a huge success last year. It was done on a bipartisan basis. It is the first major reform bill in 40 years, and we were able to get that through. Yet we need to have a person as the Assistant Administrator to make sure it is done right.

Dr. Dourson has endured a coordinated campaign against him that misrepresents who he is and his record. There are groups working to paint Dr. Dourson as an ''industry scientist.''

What you will not hear from these groups is that much of his career experience comes from the EPA itself, where he worked for 15 years. During his years at the EPA, Dr. Dourson helped establish the Integrated Risk Information System, which helps identify and document the potential dangers of chemicals found in the environment. He also has the honor of having received four bronze medals from the EPA for this commendable work. Dr. Dourson also served on EPA's Scientific Advisory Board for 6 years and has held leadership roles with a number of relevant toxicology organizations, receiving several awards from his peers.

Since his time at EPA, Dr. Dourson has devoted his career to protecting public health by founding his own nonprofit that works to develop, review, and share risk assessments on various chemicals. His nonprofit work is mostly on behalf of government, with a minority of the work done at the request of various industries—many of these industries are very pro-environmental industries—as well as providing pro bono assistance to those in need of help. In other words, he used his expertise to help people who needed help and were not able to get it in any other way.

Naturally, the industry work is the part that environmental activists have focused on to prove their claims that his research is a rubberstamp for dangerous chemicals. They hold the perspective—which is a myth—that working at the request of industry must mean that you are evil.

As always, the reality is much different. On many occasions the nonprofit has developed risk assessments that did not support the industry sponsor and were the same or lower than the safe levels set by government. Furthermore, he has provided expert testimony against industry on several occasions. Unfortunately, the coordinated attack on Dr. Dourson will persist and a good man's reputation will continue to be put at risk.

I ask that the leader find floor time for Dr. Dourson as soon as possible so he can get back to work at an agency that he served commendably for many years and ensure that those who seek to tear him down do not win.

NOMINATION OF BILL WEHRUM

I also ask that the leader prioritize another nominee that has also faced unfair and false attacks. I have known Bill Wehrum for years, and I have no doubt that he is the best choice to head the Office of Air and Radiation. I regret that his first nomination to the EPA back during the George W. Bush administration was blocked by Senate Democrats. It is my hope that we can correct that wrong and confirm him as one of the Assistant Administrators. He has served the public and is widely recognized for his knowledge of the Clean Air Act.

The Clean Air Act has been very successful. In fact, I was one of the original cosponsors of the Clean Air Act Amendments. It has performed very well. He was very much involved in that also. So there is no one more qualified to head that Office of Air and Radiation than Mr. Wehrum, and I am sure of that. He has been consistently recognized as a leader and top lawyer in environmental law by such groups and publications as Chambers USA, the Legal 500 United States, and Washingtonian magazine.

He, too, has worked at the EPA in the past and will once again serve the Agency and the American people with integrity. Mr. Wehrum is also under attack for working on behalf of industry. The environmental industry—and it is an industry, as they, too, are working to secure money for themselves by pursuing an agenda of their sponsors—is lobbying against Mr. Wehrum because he wants to make regulations workable within the scope of the statute for the regulated community.

This is very curious to me because we want environmental regulations to improve our air quality without putting entire industries out of business—a balance that is a part of the Clean Air Act. Those words are used in the Clean Air Act: The rules need to be workable and implementable without undue harm to our economy.

It is time that we returned some common sense and rule of law to the Environmental Protection Agency. We have taken the first and only step with the confirmation of Scott Pruitt, and Bill Wehrum is the next step toward that goal. Right now there has only been one confirmation, and that is for Scott Pruitt.

With the repeal of the Clean Power Plan sitting before the EPA, I ask that

the leader prioritize Mr. Wehrum's confirmation vote so that we can give the Office of Air and Radiation the leadership it needs to make the important policy objectives of the President and a majority of our colleagues and States a reality.

Again, we have five EPA nominees that have been voted out of committee, and we are now into November and only have one EPA appointee confirmed. We need to do better than that, and I think this is going to happen.

Let me just repeat some of the things that are going on in the Environmental Protection Agency. Scott Pruitt in his meeting yesterday called this to the attention of the American people. We knew it all the time, but people on the outside didn't know it and they were shocked. They found out that in the Scientific Advisory Board of the Obama administration, six of the seven on the board were direct recipients of grants from the EPA and they were making policy decisions for the EPA. Now, how bad is that? In fact, we added it up. I would state to the Chair that it came to $119 million going to six people who are on the board making decisions that affected the grants to go out. That is the type of thing that he is cleaning up. He has the guts to do it, and he is doing it.

I am anxious to get these two confirmed, and I am hopeful that will take place.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, that at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 2, there be 30 minutes of postcloture time remaining on the Eid nomination, equally divided between the leaders or their designees; that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the confirmation of the Eid nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

The Senator from Iowa.

REGULATORY REFORM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, last month the Environmental Protection Agency—EPA—Administrator, Scott Pruitt, issued a directive to all Agency employees that prohibits the so-called sue-and-settle process. This is good news for good government.

Most of us here are familiar with the term ''sue and settle.''

These are tactics whereby the EPA has, in the past, resolved certain lawsuits against it through agreements negotiated behind closed doors with politically favored interest groups. As we saw under the Obama administration, some of these agreements committed the EPA to take far-reaching regulatory action, all without an adequate opportunity for those people most impacted to have a seat at the table, as would normally be done through the regulatory process.

Today, I come to the floor to applaud Administrator Pruitt's leadership in working to end these tactics, which make a mockery of laws that Congress has put in place to ensure a transparent and accountable regulatory process. The commonsense reforms outlined in Administrator Pruitt's directive will, no doubt, help restore transparency and accountability, and these reforms should stand as a prime example for all Federal agencies to follow.

Accordingly, I call upon President Trump to use his full authority through Executive order to ensure that similar reforms are adopted across the entire bureaucracy. Regulatory decisions that affect key parts of our economy should be made in an open, transparent, and, consequently, accountable manner. But as we have seen with sue and settle, Washington bureaucrats and their interest group pals would prefer to do things their own way.

It works like this. First, an interest group sues a Federal agency, claiming the agency has failed to take regulatory action required by law. Through the lawsuit, the interest group seeks to compel the agency to take action by a new, often rushed, deadline. These plaintiff interest groups often share a common regulatory agenda with the agency they sue, such as when an environmental group sues the EPA or the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Instead of challenging the lawsuit, the agency and the interest group enter into negotiations behind closed doors to produce either a ''settlement agreement'' or a ''consent decree'' committing the agency to take regulatory action. There is no transparency, no accountability, which you would get through normal regulation writing.

Noticeably absent from these negotiations are the very parties who will be most impacted, such as farmers, manufacturers, and even the 50 States themselves, which will be charged with enforcing some of these regulations. In 2010, for example, an environmental interest group sued the Obama administration EPA to force the agency to revise certain wastewater regulations.

Wouldn't it be nice to have the people who are affected by those regulations involved in the process in an open way—the way the Administrative Procedure Act is designed?

Oddly enough, the same day the lawsuit was filed, the plaintiff interest group submitted a consent decree already signed by the EPA, which committed the agency to take prompt regulatory action. Such a scenario should raise serious questions about how truly adversarial these lawsuits and negotiations are.

To add insult to injury, regulations that have resulted from sue-and-settle tactics impose tremendous costs on the American economy. According to the American Action Forum, from 2005 to 2016, 23 sue-and-settle regulations resulted in a cost burden of $67.9 billion, with $26.5 billion in actual costs. Sixteen of the rules imposed paperwork burdens on American job creators of more than 8 million hours. Think about that. Nearly $70 billion in regulatory costs were imposed on American business owners, manufacturers, farmers, and probably taxpayers, all without due regard for transparency and the normal rulemaking process required by the Administrative Procedure Act.

Decades ago, Congress enacted the Administrative Procedure Act for the sole purpose of ensuring transparency, accountability, and, more importantly, public participation in Federal rulemaking. The EPA has been described as the citizens' ''regulatory bill of rights.'' A pillar of the Administrative Procedure Act is the notice-and-comment process, which requires agencies to notify the public of proposed regulations and respond to comments submitted—in other words, transparency.

Rulemaking driven by sue-and-settle tactics frequently results in reprioritized agency agendas and rushed deadlines for regulatory action. This renders the EPA's notice-and-comment process a mere formality. It deprives regulated entities, it deprives the States, and most importantly, it deprives the American public of sufficient time to have any meaningful input on final rules. The resulting regulatory action is driven not by the public interest but by the special interest priorities.

Sue-and-settle tactics also help agencies avoid accountability for their actions. Instead of having to answer to the public for controversial regulatory decisions, agency officials will simply point to a court order and say that their hands are tied, when really they welcomed that process.

The American people deserve better, but don't just take my word for it. The Environmental Council of the States, a national nonprofit, nonpartisan association of State and territorial environmental agency leaders, adopted a resolution in 2013 entitled ''The Need for Reform and State Participation in EPA's Consent Decrees which Settle Citizen Suits.'' The rationale behind it

provides that ''state environmental agencies are not always notified of citizen suits that allege U.S. EPA's failure to perform its nondiscretionary duties, are often not parties to these citizen suits, and are usually not provided with an opportunity to participate in the negotiation of agreements to settle citizen suits.''

The Environmental Council of the States further resolved that ''greater transparency of citizen suit settlement agreements is needed for the public to understand the impact of these agreements on the administration of environmental programs.''

Obviously, I agree. We need more transparency, more accountability, and more voices at the table. In other words, the public's business ought to be public, not some new regulation agreed to behind closed doors. I am happy to say that this administration is working to accomplish that, thanks to Administrator Pruitt. In his own words: ''The days of this regulation through litigation . . . are terminated.''

His directive puts a swift end to sue-and-settle tactics by this one agency, the EPA. It does so by adopting commonsense reforms to promote transparency and public participation in the regulatory process. It requires the publication online of notices of lawsuits filed against the EPA. It requires the EPA to reach out and notify any States or regulated entities that will be affected by the lawsuit. It requires the EPA to seek the agreement of any affected State or regulatory entities before the agency can enter into a consent decree or settlement agreement. Further, it prohibits the EPA from entering into any consent decree or settlement that converts a discretionary duty of the agency into a mandatory duty to issue, revise, or amend a regulation. Most importantly, it requires the EPA to post online for public comment any proposed consent decrees or settlement agreements before they are entered into by the court.

These and other reforms in Administrator Pruitt's directive mark a very strong step toward ensuring that States, American job creators, and the public at large have a seat at the table when regulatory decisions are made, which is exactly why Congress passed the Administrative Procedure Act.

Before I close, I will add one more thing. Earlier this year, I introduced the Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act. This bill would make permanent the very types of reforms outlined in Administrator Pruitt's directive. If it becomes law, it can't be changed at some later date. In other words, it would ensure that future administrations can't simply roll back the great work Administrator Pruitt is doing through this directive.

I am pleased to hear that the House of Representatives just passed the companion bill introduced by Congressman DOUG COLLINS. We will continue our work to build bipartisan support here in the Senate for this commonsense decree.

But, today, I urge President Trump to move forward with the example set by Administrator Pruitt because Administrator Pruitt is draining the swamp through this process. The President loves to sign Executive orders. He would probably do more good in draining the swamp by producing an Executive order like this than almost any other Executive order he could do.

There is simply no reason these reforms should be limited to just the EPA. Transparency and public participation are core elements of a more accountable government. Simply stated, they are part of the process of representative government, where people make the laws and where administrators carry out the laws, not where something is done behind closed doors because some special interest wants something or because the agency is begging to do something—which maybe someone doesn't want them to do—to get it done and to do it behind closed doors, just to work it out the way they want it and not necessarily the way it would be done if people were participating.

I applaud Administrator Pruitt's directive. I urge the President to promptly see to it that similar reforms are implemented across the administration.

So for a third time today, President Trump, issue an Executive order to all departments to do what Administrator Pruitt has done at the EPA.

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL STEVEN P. BULLARD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Brig. Gen. Steven P. Bullard of the Kentucky Air National Guard as he begins his retirement after more than three decades of achievement, service, and sacrifice. This Nation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky thank him for his diligence in defending our safety and security.

Brigadier General Bullard has served as the chief of staff, Headquarters, for the Kentucky Air National Guard and the deputy chief of the Joint Staff, Joint Force Headquarters-Kentucky National Guard since 2012. In these roles, he has been responsible for the guidance and direction of more than 8,500 Army and Air Guardsman in my home State. Brigadier General Bullard has skillfully carried out his responsibilities in these positions, as well as the duties of his civilian role as director of the division of administrative services within the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs.

On numerous projects, he was the critical link between my office and the Kentucky Guard. I know that many on my staff who have had the privilege of interacting with him have appreciated Brigadier General Bullard's dependability and talent, which I am told also extends to the golf course.

Entering officer training school at Lackland Air Force Base in 1985, Brigadier General Bullard took the first steps of his decorated military career. He later achieved the rating of master navigator, having completed more than 5,500 flight hours on various aircraft. Over the years, Brigadier General Bullard flew missions in 75 countries, including a deployment to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. One might think that, with such aviation skill, he would have more luck traveling as a passenger on commercial air, but his colleagues report that throughout his career, a number of commercial flights he has traveled on have experienced weather or maintenance delays resulting in numerous nights in the airport for the trained airman.

Brigadier General Bullard has earned and been awarded numerous military awards and decorations for his selfless service to the Commonwealth and his Nation. These honors include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two bronze oakleaf clusters, the Air Medal with one bronze oakleaf cluster, and the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal. These awards are recognition of Brigadier General Bullard's distinguished actions on behalf of our Nation and Kentucky.

The men and women of Kentucky's National Guard serve a unique mission in our Armed Forces. Their efforts to help fight our Nation's wars, defend our homeland, provide relief from natural disasters, and maintain critical State, Federal, and international partnerships in support of our Nation's safety and security have demonstrated the vital nature of the National Guard's service. I am proud to represent them in the U.S. Senate, and I am grateful for their sacrifice on behalf of our Commonwealth and our Nation.

As we celebrate Brigadier General Bullard's retirement, we are also saddened to lose such a capable and dedicated public servant. In addition to his responsibilities at headquarters, Brigadier General Bullard has also worked as the chairman of the Louisville Armed Forces Committee, two terms as the president of the National Guard Association of Kentucky, and as the volunteer executive director of the Kentucky Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. On behalf of the people of Kentucky, I would like to thank him for his 32 years of achievement and service. He has earned a relaxing retirement, spending time with his family and friends. Finally, I would ask my colleagues in the Senate to join me in paying tribute to Brigadier General Bullard, a brave American, a selfless public servant, and a proud Kentuckian.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GLENN POSHARD

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Dr. Glenn Poshard has served the United States in many ways. He served in the military and taught in high school. He represented rural southern Illinois in the Illinois State Senate from 1984 to

1988 and in Congress from 1989 to 1998. I served with him for 8 years in the House of Representatives.

Glenn was a strong proponent of campaign finance reform so much so that he limited individual donations and refused contributions from political action committees when he ran for Governor in 1998.

Following his tenure in Congress, Glenn and his wife, Jo, founded the Poshard Foundation for Abused Children. The foundation has helped the abused, abandoned, and neglected children of southern Illinois for 18 years.

Glenn's service to the community also continued through his role as president of Southern Illinois University where he was the second longest serving president in the history of the Southern Illinois University system.

Earlier this month, Glenn reminded us what service to our country and what the American flag means for us in an op-ed in the Southern Illinoisan, which I have included here.

Dr. Poshard wrote:

In 1962, I joined the U.S. Army on my 17th birthday. I had just graduated from high school and was following in the tradition of my family's military service. They had served in the Civil War and fought their way across Europe and the Pacific in two World Wars. Some were POWs and one, my first cousin and closest friend, Dennis, awarded the Bronze Star for bravery in Vietnam, was the first young man from our county to be killed in that war.

During my three years of enlistment, I served a tour of duty with the First Cav Division in Korea. When my active duty was finished in December 1965, I immediately entered SIU Carbondale on the GI Bill. Protests against the Vietnam War were already gripping the campus. They were abhorrent to me, particularly when the American flag was used to symbolize anger toward the government. But I was busy, carrying a full load of classes, working three part-time jobs, and trying to support a new family. By the time Old Main burned and the campus closed in the spring of 1970, I was beyond anger for the thousands of protesters desecrating our flag and destroying my beloved university.

I made no attempt to understand the difference between the symbolism of the flag and the substance of the Bill of Rights as it pertained to freedom to speak against perceived wrongs of our government.

Years later, as a member of Congress, I was forced to grapple with this volatile issue again. In my first term, a bill was submitted to amend the Constitution prohibiting the desecration of the American flag as a means of protest against our government. Now, I had to understand this issue in its deepest, broadest context. My family and I went to Philadelphia where I sat in Independence Hall, contemplating those early debates of our forefathers on issues of equality, justice and freedom. Moved to tears, I was about to cast a vote of which the historical significance reached back to arguments which formed the founding documents of our country, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

We drove to Gettysburg and I stood where our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, delivered his address, taking us back to our Declaration of Independence, which stated, ''All men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'' When our forefathers thought they had been denied these rights long enough by the King of England, they fought a Revolutionary War to gain them. And they fought a Civil War to extend those rights to slaves. Over the next 100 years, they fought all over the world to secure these rights for other people.

President Kennedy spoke of this in his inaugural address. He said, ''These same revolutionary beliefs for which our forefathers fought are still at issue around the globe today. The belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the State, but from the hand of God. We dare not forget that we are the heirs of that first Revolution.'' The Declaration goes on to say that when any form of government becomes destructive of these rights then it is the right of the people to protest and alter that form of government so that those rights are secured to the people. And in the 1960s and '70s, people protested against what they believed was an unjust war which imperiled their lives, their freedoms, and their pursuit of happiness. They believed that nearly 60,000 deaths were enough in a war our government either could not or would not win.

When hundreds of thousands of mostly white young men in the '60s and thousands of mostly black young men today protest against their government, it is because they feel their God-given rights are threatened. But why involve the flag? In a Supreme Court decision, Board of Education v. Barnett in 1943, Justice Jackson wrote words especially relevant to this issue. He said, ''Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of freedom's substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order''—i.e. our flag.

For many, it is not enough to write a letter to their congressman, attend a meeting or participate in a march. They must take the most important thing symbolizing our freedom—the flag—and cast it at the feet of their government to show how emphatically they disagree with government allowing the infringement of their rights. Millions of people of color in our country today feel threatened. They just want to enjoy the same security and freedom we all enjoy and the flag has become central to their protest precisely because it matters, as it did in the '60s to an earlier generation.

When I protested as a young man in my church that it was not necessary for God to send His only Son to be sacrificed for my freedom, that He could have provided another way, the pastor said, ''Oh yes it was, because He could not win your freedom from sin by sacrificing that which didn't matter much, He had to sacrifice the most important thing He loved, His Son.''

The Supreme Court has said that the use of the flag in dissent against the government does not diminish it or the contribution of the men and women who fought for our freedom, but instead stands as a powerful symbol to illustrate the substance of our Constitution's Bill of Rights.

I listened carefully to the debate in 1990 on the flag desecration amendment which for the first time in 200 years would have amended our Bill of Rights. These words from President Reagan's solicitor general, Charles Fried, express my beliefs entirely. ''The flag, as all in this debate agree, symbolizes our nation, its history, its values. We love the flag because it symbolizes the United States; but we must love the Constitution even more, because the Constitution is not a symbol. It is the thing itself.''

Reading Glenn's op-ed, I was reminded of the late John Glenn, colleague, friend, and legend. He testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2004 about the flag of the United States. This is a man who carried the flag into space as an astronaut. He served in the Marine Corps. When presented with a flag-burning amendment, he said, ''It would be a hollow victory indeed if we preserved the symbol of our freedoms by chipping away at those fundamental freedoms themselves.''

Free speech is the bedrock of our democracy. As millions of Americans are participating in the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution today, we should remember Glenn Porshard's point that they do so not to destroy our Republic, but to celebrate the strength of our Constitution.

Thank you.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 257, on the nomination of Joan Larsen, of Michigan, to be U.S. circuit judge for the Sixth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 258, on the motion to invoke cloture on Allison Eid, of Colorado, to be U.S. circuit judge for the Tenth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.•

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE STEVENS, JR.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today we honor an icon of the film industry and a distinguished public servant, George Stevens, Jr. For five decades, George Stevens, Jr., served as the founding director of the American Film Institute, AFI, an organization that led the clarion call to preserve and celebrate America's film heritage.

In honoring him, I would like to state the following in the RECORD:

Whereas, George Stevens, Jr., stood in the Rose Garden of the White House in 1967 when President Lyndon Johnson announced there would be an American Film Institute in order to address the crisis of America's disappearing motion picture heritage.

Whereas, through the extraordinary vision of the Library of Congress and the American Film Institute, more than 37,000 motion pictures are now safely preserved in the AFI Collection at the Library of Congress.

Whereas, George Stevens, Jr., led the effort at the AFI to create a rescue list of movies with the Museum of Modern Art, Eastman House, and the Library of Congress and locate and preserve missing films.

Whereas, the collection includes classic American films, including ''It's A Wonderful Life,'' ''Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,'' ''The Ten Commandment,'' ''Puss in Boots,'' and George Stevens, Sr.'s ''Gunga Din.''

Whereas, George Stevens, Jr., expanded the horizons of the next generation of filmmakers and visionaries with the creation an AFI Center for Advanced Film Studies.

Whereas, George Stevens, Jr., unleashed the power of filmmaking in service to the

American people, leading the United States Information Agency Motion Picture Service and producing award-winning films about the fabric of American life.

Therefore, today in the U.S. Senate, I honor the 50th anniversary of the American Film Institute and the extraordinary legacy of George Stevens, Jr., director, producer, playwright, and public servant without equal. Thomas Edison may be given credit for inventing the film industry, but it is George Stevens, Jr., and the American Film Institute who have preserved it for future generations to come.

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNKER'S THERAPEUTIC PRODUCTS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Unker's Therapeutic Products for its 35th year in business. This is an impressive milestone for their organization.

Unker's Therapeutic Products' story of starting out with Patrick Henry's hard work in his garage to being a staple in Wyoming and even sponsoring racecars is the embodiment of the American dream. I am pleased to hear of the company's success and of the plans to continue this business for years to come. Unker's Therapeutic Products provides both good jobs and much-needed services to the people of our towns and communities. It is greatly appreciated. Good businesses make for strongly knit communities, and that helps us all.

President and CEO Patricia Pendelton and all the folks at Unker's Therapeutic Products can be very proud they have served Weston County and the State of Wyoming for so long. Their hard work and determined effort have played a part in its current and continued success.

I extend my best wishes and congratulations to Patricia and to everyone who is a part of this company.

Thank you.

RECOGNIZING COLLEGE WOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize College Wood Elementary School of Carmel, IN, for being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has allowed schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments, particularly in closing the achievement gaps among students.

College Wood's mission is to provide opportunities for all students to realize their potential. College Wood students have consistently ranked among the top 10 percent in annual standardized testing. By encouraging every student to strive for excellence, explore opportunities, and realize their full potential, College Wood students are equipped to succeed and graduate.

College Wood strives to provide a quality, well-rounded education and teach students the traits of successful leaders and communicators. To that end, the school includes social and emotional learning in its curriculum. Social Thinking and Superflex lessons instill social awareness, emotional management skills, and perspective-enhancing experiences.

The school also seeks to help teach students about the importance of service and helping others. Through several philanthropic endeavors, College Wood students, parents, and staff work closely together to give back to the community. Several donation drives throughout the year lead up to the school's biggest annual event to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

I am proud to recognize College Wood Elementary School principal Kathryn Olssen, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education has led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and the Carmel community well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate College Wood Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING WHITE LICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize White Lick Elementary School of Brownsburg, IN, for being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has allowed schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments, particularly in closing the achievement gaps among students.

White Lick Elementary School currently serves over 600 students and offers a variety of education and extracurricular opportunities for its students.

White Lick Elementary School has been effective in tailoring its curriculum to the educational needs of each individual student. As part of its commitment to students, the school provides programs like Learning Lab, which offers students struggling academically extra support in reading and math in a small-group setting every day for 30 minutes.

The school also prides itself on the professional development of its staff. Teachers are given the chance to learn and grow through weekly meetings with their professional learning communities. In these meetings, teachers come together to analyze test scores and other data as they discuss how to better meet the needs of their students.

The school's investment in students is reflected in the diverse opportunities it offers. Whether it is through the ''Step-a-thon,'' where students participate in a physical challenge to help raise funds for various school programs or the numerous afterschool clubs, White Lick has excelled in offering resources and programs beyond the classroom.

I am proud to recognize White Lick Elementary School principal Susan Wise, the entire staff, the student body, the parents, and the entire Brownsburg community. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education has led not only to this prestigious recognition but will benefit your students and Indiana well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate White Lick Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAINE COALITION TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the 40th anniversary of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, MCEDV, and its nine member organizations and resource centers: Hope and Justice Project, Partners for Peace, Next Step, New Hope for Women, Family Violence Project, Safe Voices, Family Crisis Services, Caring Unlimited, and Immigrant Resource Center of Maine. I am humbled and thankful for their tireless service to end the cycle of abuse existing in too many homes across Maine, our Nation, and the world.

Originally formed in 1977 as the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services, and renamed the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence in 2001, the MCEDV has spent four decades being advocates for victims of domestic violence and have never lost their focus. Their efforts have helped countless people find their own voices and regain their strength to live a violence-free life. The MCEDV has helped ensure there are direct service programs, shelters, transitional housing, and court advocacy available to everyone throughout our State. Not only do they partner with the nine member-projects mentioned above, but they also coordinate efforts and give voice to the education of the public, lawmakers, law enforcement, friends, and neighbors to make domestic violence a community-State-national and global issue that each of us has a responsibility to confront.

It is not possible to put words to the significant impact the MCEDV has had, the lives that have been saved, and terrifying existences turned into futures of peace. However, it would not be fair to their work to not acknowledge the lives that have been lost to domestic violence. All genders, all ages, all

races, all socio-economics categories, domestic violence knows no boundaries, and fear continues to be a strong silencer. However, with the support and services provided by the MCEDV and its membership, many victims have found exceptional strength to tell their story, found their courage to name the abuse and the abuser and support others to shine a light on this pandemic of violence.

I cannot overstate how awe-inspiring the exceptional staying power and determination of this coalition of advocates is and how impactful their efforts are. They have not only mobilized a state-wide interest in the topic of domestic violence but have also inspired people to work with them to even further strengthen the message that there is no excuse for domestic abuse. It has been said that peace in the world starts with peace in the home. Thank you to the MCEDV for living those words and helping to change the world for the better.

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN OLSON

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a member of my staff who has been in public service on Capitol Hill for 30 years. Susan Olson is my deputy chief of staff and general counsel. She has served Members of Congress, the Senate, and congressional committees for decades and is a well-known, beloved public servant around the Hill.

Susan joined my staff when I came to the Senate in 2011, but she already had a long track record of distinguished service and respect from her peers. I got to know Susan when she served as secretary of the House NATO Parliamentary Assembly Delegation, of which I was a member during my years in the House of Representatives. Susan's knowledge, determination, and warm personality helped her earn the respect and admiration of Members and staff alike. She also served as a valued staff member on the House Ethics Committee where she was a legal counsel from 2004 to 2011.

Prior to working on the Ethics Committee, Susan served in the office of former Congressman Doug Bereuter of Nebraska for 17 years as legislative assistant, legislative director, and chief of staff. During her tenure with Congressman Bereuter, she also served as the secretary of the House Delegation to the British American Parliamentary Group from 1998 to 2000.

Susan's time on my staff has been marked by her wealth of knowledge and expertise on so many things. She is a trusted adviser, but more importantly, a dear friend to me and to everyone on my staff in Washington and Arkansas. We love Susan very much and appreciate all her hard work. She takes a personal interest in everyone she meets, from the many interns who cycle in and out of my office, to those on my staff and the countless men and women she has worked with over the years during her time on the Hill.

We are so happy for and proud of Susan for reaching this milestone. I congratulate her for the many years of service she has rendered to the U.S. Congress and to our country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DIANA TOLSTEDT

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, during National Adoption Awareness Month, I have the distinct honor of recognizing Diana Tolstedt of Billings. For nearly three decades, she has been helping people navigate all aspects of the adoption process. She has made a positive and lasting impact in the lives of many Montanans.

Through her work with Lutheran Social Services of Montana, Diana has gently guided and counseled adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive families. For a dozen years, she has been a recruiter with Wendy's Wonderful Kids, leading a program dedicated to finding adoptive families for the longest waiting children in foster care from eastern Montana.

Throughout the United States, there are over 100,000 children in foster care who are waiting for adoption, each needing a loving home and stable environment to allow them to thrive and reach their potential. In the midst of this adoption challenge, folks like Diana are a guiding light to help others traverse adoption obstacles. I would like to thank Diana for having a heart as big as Yellowstone County and a commitment to brightening the hopes of children one life at a time.•

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMRO FABRICATING CORPORATION

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize AMRO Fabricating Corporation for 40 years of business in our State. AMRO, a small family-owned business based in El Monte and Riverside, CA, employs more than 250 people. The company has made important contributions to NASA rocket programs, including building the large aluminum panels for the space launch system rocket and the Orion crew capsule. AMRO has used State and Federal grants to train high school and college students on how to develop critical job skills, such as aerospace welding and engineering, preparing them for good-paying jobs in the future. Founded in 1977, AMRO marks its 40th anniversary this year. I extend my warmest congratulations to AMRO for achieving this milestone.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:50 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2521. An act to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to include South Carolina as a part of the Virginia/Carolina peanut producing region for purposes of appointment to the Peanut Standards Board.

H.R. 2921. An act to establish a vegetation management pilot program on National Forest System land to better protect utility infrastructure from passing wildfire, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2941. An act to provide for the conveyance of certain National Forest System land within Kisatchie National Forest in the State of Louisiana.

H.R. 3567. An act to authorize the purchase of a small parcel of Natural Resources Conservation Service property in Riverside, California, by the Riverside Corona Resource Conservation District, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1329. An act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2521. An act to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to include South Carolina as a part of the Virginia/Carolina peanut producing region for purposes of appointment to the Peanut Standards Board; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

H.R. 2921. An act to establish a vegetation management pilot program on National Forest System land to better protect utility infrastructure from passing wildfire, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

H.R. 2941. An act to provide for the conveyance of certain National Forest System land within Kisatchie National Forest in the State of Louisiana; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

H.R. 3567. An act to authorize the purchase of a small parcel of Natural Resources Conservation Service property in Riverside, California, by the Riverside Corona Resource Conservation District, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–3318. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Darryl L. Roberson, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3319. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Restrictions on Qualified Financial Contracts of Certain FDIC–Supervised Institutions; Revisions to the Definition of Qualifying Master Netting Agreement and Related Definitions'' (RIN3064–AE46) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3320. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, Department of Transportation, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 27, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3321. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Procedures to Adjust Customs COBRA User Fees to Reflect Inflation'' ((RIN1515–AE25) (CBP Dec. 17–16)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3322. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2018 Limitations Adjusted As Provided in Section 415(d), etc.'' (Notice 2017–64) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 16, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3323. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to the Republic of Korea to support the manufacture, integration, installation, and testing of the Electro-Optical Tracking System II in the amount of $3,200,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17–072); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3324. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Japan to support the integration, installation, operation, training, testing, maintenance, and repair of the KC–767 tanker in the amount of $100,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17–069); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3325. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Canada for the manufacture of F404 and F414 aircraft engine components in Canada to supply General Electric Aviation's production lines in the United States in the amount of $100,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17–061); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3326. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of firearms and accessories abroad controlled under Category I of the United States Munitions List of M60 and M2HB machine guns, MK19 grenade machine guns, and associated components to Tunisia in the amount of $1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17–038); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3327. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Japan to support the manufacture, integration, installation, and assembly of the Japanese Patriot PAC–3 missile program in the amount of $100,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17–048); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3328. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–130, ''Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Support Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3329. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–152, ''General Obligation Bonds and Bond Anticipation Notes for Fiscal Years 2018–2023 Authorization Temporary Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3330. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–153, ''Capitol Riverfront Business Improvement District Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3331. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–169, ''DC HealthCare Alliance Recertification Simplification Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3332. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Japan for the manufacture of PAC–3 Missile Segment Command and Launch System for the Japanese PATRIOT Growth Program in the amount of $100,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17–059); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3333. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Elizabeth City, NC'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–0384)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3334. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Redmond, OR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0390)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3335. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and E Airspace; Battle Creek, MI'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0232)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3336. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and E Airspace; Battle Creek, MI'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0232)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3337. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Evansville, IN'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9540)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3338. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Sunriver, OR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0617)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3339. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Canadian, TX; and Wheeler, TX'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0458)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3340. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Medford, WI and Waupaca, WI'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0388)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3341. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Hebron, NE'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0175)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3342. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of

Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Clarinda, IA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0536)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3343. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Augusta, AR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9274)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3344. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Picayune, MS'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0320)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3345. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace, Big Timber, MT'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0392)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3346. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Hattiesburg, MS'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0321)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3347. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Onida, SD'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9546)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3348. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace and Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Kaunakakai, HI'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0295)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3349. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Restricted Areas R–3004A and R–3004B and Establishment of R–3004C; Fort Gordon, GA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0886)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3350. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Restricted Area R–2603; Fort Carson, CO'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–8927)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3351. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0498)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3352. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0813)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3353. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0248)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3354. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0515)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3355. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0624)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3356. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Defense and Space S. A. (Formerly Known as Construcciones Aeronauticas, S.A.) Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9386)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3357. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9183)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3358. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0243)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3359. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0244)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3360. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–8434)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3361. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0691)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3362. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0254)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3363. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Honeywell International Inc. Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9451)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3364. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Honeywell International Inc. Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0034)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3365. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; PIAGGIO AERO INDUSTRIES S.p.A. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0648)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3366. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0753)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3367. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (57); Amdt. No. 3765'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3368. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (23); Amdt. No. 3766'' (RIN2120–AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3369. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Stage 5 Airplane Noise Standards'' ((RIN2120–AK52) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3782)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3370. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airspace Designations; Incorporation by Reference Amendments'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0798)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3371. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Electronic Stability Control Systems for Heavy Vehicles'' (RIN2127–AL78) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 31, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3372. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 27, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–132. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to an amendment to the United States Constitution; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and with an amended preamble:

S. Res. 279. A resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

*Hester Maria Peirce, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for a term expiring June 5, 2020.

*Robert J. Jackson, Jr., of New York, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 5, 2019.

*David J. Ryder, of New Jersey, to be Director of the Mint for a term of five years.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 2049. A bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to increase support for conservation practices under the emergency conservation program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 2050. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to provide to producers partial payments under the livestock indemnity program for livestock sold for salvage; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2051. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize the physician self-referral prohibitions to promote care coordination in the merit-based incentive payment system and to facilitate physician practice participation in alternative payment models under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 2052. A bill to provide for temporary funding for health insurance cost-sharing reduction payments and provide targeted tax relief, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 2053. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to increase the maximum amount of assistance authorized under supplemental agricultural disaster assistance programs; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 2054. A bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to establish a program to provide advance payments under the Emergency Conservation Program for the repair or replacement of fencing; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2055. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to better address substance use and substance use disorders among young people; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2056. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a traffic barrier installation grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. UDALL):

S. 2057. A bill to prevent conflicts of interest that stem from the revolving door that raises concerns about the independence of pharmaceutical regulators; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2058. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the thresholds by which medical facility projects and medical facility leases of the Department of Veterans Affairs are considered major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases, respectively, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' 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. BROWN (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 319. A resolution supporting the goals, activities, and ideals of Prematurity Awareness Month; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORNYN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 320. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, commending domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence victim service providers, crisis hotline staff, and first responders serving victims of domestic violence for their compassionate support of survivors of domestic violence, and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should continue to support efforts to end domestic violence, provide safety for victims of domestic violence and their families, and hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 66

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 66, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 109

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 109, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to

provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 382

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 428, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to authorize States to provide coordinated care to children with complex medical conditions through enhanced pediatric health homes, and for other purposes.

S. 527

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 527, a bill to improve access to emergency medical services, and for other purposes.

S. 591

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 591, a bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, and for other purposes.

S. 708

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 708, a bill to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1112

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) 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. 1191

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1191, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to refine how Medicare pays for orthotics and prosthetics and to improve beneficiary experience and outcomes with orthotic and prosthetic care, and for other purposes.

S. 1333

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1333, a bill to provide for rental assistance for homeless or at-risk Indian veterans.

S. 1400

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1400, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, and for other purposes.

S. 1480

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1480, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include biomass heating appliances for tax credits available for energy-efficient building property and energy property.

S. 1498

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1498, a bill to establish in the Smithsonian Institution a comprehensive American women's history museum, and for other purposes.

S. 1700

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1700, a bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to establish a WaterSense program within the Environmental Protection Agency, and for other purposes.

S. 1720

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1720, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish a skills-based immigration points system, to focus family-sponsored immigration on spouses and minor children, to eliminate the Diversity Visa Program, to set a limit on the number of refugees admitted annually to the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1838

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1838, a bill to repeal the authority under the National Labor Relations Act for States to enact laws prohibiting agreements requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment, and for other purposes.

S. 1879

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1879, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1967

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1967, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional exemptions to the individual mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 2016

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2016, a bill to prevent an unconstitutional strike against North Korea.

S. RES. 310

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 310, a resolution recognizing the importance of a continued commitment to ending pediatric AIDS worldwide.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 319—SUPPORTING THE GOALS, ACTIVITIES, AND IDEALS OF PREMATURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 319

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, complications of preterm birth is now the number one killer of children under 5 years of age worldwide;

Whereas 1,100,000 children die every year due to complications of preterm birth;

Whereas preterm birth is a global problem that exacts a harsh toll on families from all parts of society in every country;

Whereas there are stark inequalities in the survival rates of preterm babies born around the world;

Whereas complications from preterm birth have lifelong consequences for the health, growth, and development of infants;

Whereas up to 75 percent of deaths resulting from preterm birth worldwide can be prevented through proven low-cost interventions;

Whereas countries can improve maternal health and the survival rate of babies born prematurely by making strategic investments in health care systems to ensure access to high-quality adolescent and pre-pregnancy care, prenatal care, childbirth services, emergency obstetric care, postnatal care, and comprehensive care for affected newborns;

Whereas according to data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, preterm-related causes are the leading contributors to infant death in the United States, accounting for more than ⅓ of infant deaths;

Whereas while the preterm birth rate in the United States decreased from a peak of 12.8 percent in 2006, the preterm birth rate of 9.8 percent in 2016 is still too high;

Whereas there are significant racial and ethnic disparities in preterm birth rates among many communities in the United States;

Whereas the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies estimated in 2006 that the annual societal economic cost associated with preterm birth in the United States was $26,200,000,000;

Whereas many preterm births can be prevented through evidence-based public health programs focused on reducing risk factors such as tobacco use, inadequate birth spacing, and early elective deliveries; and

Whereas, in the United States and around the world, November is recognized as Prematurity Awareness Month: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the recognition of Prematurity Awareness Month;

(2) supports efforts at home and abroad—

(A) to reduce the impact of preterm births by improving maternal health during and after pregnancy; and

(B) to advance the care and treatment of infants born preterm;

(3) honors individuals working domestically and internationally to reduce preterm births; and

(4) expresses the intent of the Senate to promote evidence-based prevention interventions to prevent preterm birth and improve outcomes for affected infants.

SENATE RESOLUTION 320—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH, COMMENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM ADVOCATES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS, CRISIS HOTLINE STAFF, AND FIRST RESPONDERS SERVING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR THEIR COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT OF SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT CONGRESS SHOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, PROVIDE SAFETY FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND HOLD PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACCOUNTABLE

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORNYN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 320

Whereas, according to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey—

(1) up to 12,000,000 individuals in the United States report experiencing intimate partner violence, including physical violence, rape, or stalking; and

(2) approximately 1 in 5 women in the United States and up to 1 in 7 men in the United States have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetimes;

Whereas, on average, 3 women in the United States are killed each day by a current or former intimate partner, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics;

Whereas domestic violence can affect anyone, but women aged 18 to 34 typically experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence;

Whereas most female victims of intimate partner violence have been victimized by the same offender previously;

Whereas domestic violence is cited as a significant factor in homelessness among families;

Whereas millions of children are exposed to domestic violence each year;

Whereas research shows that boys who are exposed to domestic violence in their households are more likely to become perpetrators of intimate partner violence;

Whereas victims of domestic violence experience immediate and long-term negative outcomes, including detrimental effects on mental and physical health;

Whereas victims of domestic violence may lose several days of paid work each year and may lose their jobs due to reasons stemming from domestic violence;

Whereas crisis hotlines serving domestic violence victims operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, and offer important crisis intervention services, support services, information, and referrals for victims;

Whereas staff and volunteers of domestic violence shelters and programs in the United States, in cooperation with 56 State and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, serve—

(1) thousands of adults and children each day; and

(2) 1,000,000 adults and children each year;

Whereas, according to a 2016 survey conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, 72,959 domestic violence victims were served by domestic violence shelters and programs around the United States in a single day;

Whereas law enforcement officers in the United States put their lives at risk each day by responding to incidents of domestic violence, which can be among the most volatile and deadly calls;

Whereas Congress first demonstrated a significant commitment to supporting victims of domestic violence with the enactment of the landmark Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 et seq.);

Whereas Congress has remained committed to protecting survivors of all forms of domestic violence and sexual abuse by making Federal funding available to support the activities that are authorized under—

(1) the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 et seq.); and

(2) the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12291 et seq.);

Whereas there is a need to continue to support programs and activities aimed at domestic violence intervention and domestic violence prevention in the United States; and

Whereas individuals and organizations that are dedicated to preventing and ending domestic violence should be recognized: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate supports the goals and ideals of ''National Domestic Violence Awareness Month''; and

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that Congress should—

(A) continue to raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States and the corresponding devastating effects of domestic violence on survivors, families, and communities; and

(B) pledge continued support for programs designed—

(i) to assist survivors;

(ii) to hold perpetrators accountable; and

(iii) to bring an end to domestic violence.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to remind my colleagues that we annually commemorate National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in November. This is a time when we're called to increase public awareness and understanding of domestic violence.

As noted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, domestic violence is a crime that thrives when we remain silent. That's why the Senate today passed the resolution that I recently introduced with Senator FEINSTEIN to commemorate National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

As stated in our resolution, Congress should continue to raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States. We also should pledge our continued support for programs designed to assist survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and bring an end to domestic violence.

Congress has made support to survivors a national priority for over three decades, through the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act, the Victims of Crime Act, and other Federal laws. Through the enactment of laws criminalizing domestic violence at the State and local level, we've also sent a strong signal to abusers that domestic violence is not a ''private'' matter.

We've come a long way, but we still have much work to do on this front. Even now, domestic violence affects millions in the United States, including women, men, and children of every age and socio-economic status. About one in five women will at some point in their lifetime become a victim of this crime, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

I applaud the many individuals and organizations in Iowa and elsewhere around the Nation that work around the clock to respond to victims in crisis. They include the hotline personnel who provide support 365 days a year. They include the staff and volunteers at shelters, who provide safe havens for those escaping abuse. They include the advocates who champion survivors' interests at the State and Federal levels. Last, but certainly not least, they include the first responders who compassionately respond to victims in crisis.

We applaud their continued service and we continue to support the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 1,

2017, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: James Bridenstine, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Dana Baiocco, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and Nazakhtar Nikakhtar, of Maryland, and Neil Jacobs, of North Carolina, both to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 10 a.m., to vote on the following nominations: David J. Ryder, of New Jersey, to be Director of the Mint, Department of the Treasury, and Hester Maria Peirce, of Ohio, and Robert J. Jackson, Jr., of New York, both to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Scott Garrett, of New Jersey, to be President, Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President, Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, and Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, and Claudia Slacik, of New York, each to be a Member of the Board of Directors, all of the Export-Import Bank.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Irwin Steven Goldstein, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Rebecca Eliza Gonzales, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, Lisa A. Johnson, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia, James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador to Luxembourg, and Sean P. Lawler, of Maryland, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service, all of the Department of State.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, Terry A. Doughty, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, Terry Fitzgerald Moorer, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama, and Mark Saalfield Norris, Sr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–628 to conduct a hearing entitled ''Building Tribal economies: Modernizing tax policies that work for Indian country.''

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in room SH–216 to conduct a hearing entitled ''Social Media Influence in the 2016 U.S. Elections.''

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern, Isamar Chavez, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of the day.

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

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 320, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 320) supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, commending domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence victim service providers, crisis hotline staff, and first responders serving victims of domestic violence for their compassionate support of survivors of domestic violence, and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should continue to support efforts to end domestic violence, provide safety for victims of domestic violence and their families, and hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 320) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, November 2; 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; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Eid nomination under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

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.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:37 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, November 2, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MICHAEL D. GRIFFIN, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE ALAN F. ESTEVEZ.

RANDALL G. SCHRIVER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE DAVID B. SHEAR.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOEL DANIES, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE GABONESE REPUBLIC, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DOUGLAS WEBSTER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE LAWRENCE A. WARDER, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

SCOTT A. MUGNO, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE DAVID MORRIS MICHAELS.

THE JUDICIARY

JAMES R. SWEENEY II, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA, VICE SARAH EVANS BARKER, RETIRED.

FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING–NAMED MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO BE A CONSULAR OFFICER AND A SECRETARY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

LISA–FELICIA AFI AKORLI, OF ARIZONA
JAMES STEVEN ALVARADO, OF VIRGINIA
BRITTANY NICOLE ANKERMAN, OF VIRGINIA
JUAN JOSE APARICIO, OF CALIFORNIA
ASHLE MARIE AROSTEGUI, OF FLORIDA
MARC N. BACHARACH, OF VIRGINIA
WILLIAM HUTCHESON BAKSI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DANIELLE PAULINE BARCHETTI, OF VIRGINIA
GEORGIOS BARDIS, OF MARYLAND
ERIC TOWNSHEND BARKER, OF VIRGINIA
KATHLEEN V. BARRAMEDA, OF VIRGINIA

WILLIAM ABELLO BASKERVILLE III, OF COLORADO
BYRON J. BEAN, OF VIRGINIA
JESSICA ANN BECK, OF VIRGINIA
HEATHER NICOLE BLAIR, OF VIRGINIA
THOMAS BOYLE, OF VIRGINIA
GREGORY W. BRONSON, OF VIRGINIA
SHANE ERIC BROOKS, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN R. BUFFALOE, OF VIRGINIA
TAREN KATRICE BURKETT–SORLIE, OF VIRGINIA
JASON BURKHOLDER, OF VIRGINIA
DANIELLE NICOLE BURLEY, OF VIRGINIA
DANIEL JACOB BURNETT, OF COLORADO
SHAWN CHRISTOPHER BUSH, JR., OF NEW YORK
JUNY GUADALUPE CANENGUEZ, OF VIRGINIA
PHILIP MUIR CHAMBERLAIN, OF ARIZONA
MARCUS ALAN CHANEY, OF CALIFORNIA
MICHAEL LOUIS CONNELLY, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN F. COOK, OF VIRGINIA
HAILEY MCCALL COOK, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ANDREW MICHAEL COSTA, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL CRAWFORD, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN BRIDGER CRONBERGER, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL EUGENE CROWLEY, OF VIRGINIA
NICOLLE ANN CUMBERLAND, OF VIRGINIA
LINDA MARIE DOMINICK, OF VIRGINIA
TIFFANY LAUREN DOZIER, OF VIRGINIA
DANIEL L. DUVAL, OF VIRGINIA
CAITLIN MCKENNA EMBREY, OF PENNSYLVANIA
DAVID MCNEILL FAUST, OF CALIFORNIA
ANDREW ROBERT FEITT, OF VIRGINIA
LYNDSAY FORD, OF VIRGINIA
JASON RICHARD FROST, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN D. FROST, OF VIRGINIA
ANDREA LYNN GARBE, OF VIRGINIA
RENEE ANN GARCIA, OF COLORADO
JONATHAN MCDONOUGH GEARING, OF KANSAS
VALERIE LYNNE GECOWETS, OF VIRGINIA
MATTHEW S. GERSHWIN, OF VIRGINIA
MEAGAN ELIZABETH GILTNER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JEFFREY JAMES GOERSS, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL DAVID GOLLEM, OF VIRGINIA
JOSHUA GUILO GONZALEZ, OF OHIO
REBECCA JOY GOULD, OF VIRGINIA
NICHOLAS ALEXANDER GRANDCHAMPS, OF FLORIDA
JOHN COOPER GREEN, OF VIRGINIA
JOANNE DANELLE GREENBERG, OF VIRGINIA
KAMOLRAT S. GRIMES, OF VIRGINIA
LEE D GROENEVELD, OF TEXAS
STEPHEN RAY GROVE, OF VIRGINIA
TARA CHRISTINE HAASE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JENNIFER A HAM, OF TEXAS
DANIEL JOHN HARPER, OF ARIZONA
LARRY ORNEZ HARRIS, JR., OF ILLINOIS
RIJEN B. HENDRICK, OF VIRGINIA
TESSA HENRY, OF PENNSYLVANIA
NATHANAEL GUSTAV HINS, OF VIRGINIA
MACY LYNNE HINTZMAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
TANNY HO, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ERIC HOFFMAN, OF FLORIDA
DEJE JURIE HOLMES, OF ILLINOIS
ROSS R. HOLTAN, OF VIRGINIA
ALISON PAIGE HOPKINS, OF VIRGINIA
CHARLES WILLIAM HOUGH, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN PATRICK HULTINE, OF VIRGINIA
NIA THERESA JACKSON, OF FLORIDA
MAURICE EZEKIEL JACKSON, OF FLORIDA
NATAZIA RACHELE JOHNSON, OF VIRGINIA
STACEY LEAH JOHNSON, OF VIRGINIA
JEFFREY CHINEDU JOSEPH, OF ILLINOIS
SUSAN ALEXANDRA KAHRS, OF VIRGINIA
AJA SIERRA KENNEDY, OF NORTH CAROLINA
JEAN E. KHALIFE, OF VIRGINIA
JOY ALEXANDREA KING, OF FLORIDA
JOHN ANTHONY KRISTENSEN, OF VIRGINIA
MARCI LUEDTKE LACY, OF VIRGINIA
DAVID A. LAHTI, OF VIRGINIA
DAVID W. LAUDENBACK, OF VIRGINIA
CATHERINE LEMERY, OF VIRGINIA
DANIEL THOMAS LEONARD, OF VIRGINIA
THOMAS J. LEONETTE, OF VIRGINIA
JASON ERIC LESSER, OF VIRGINIA
GRACE EUNHAE LIM, OF VIRGINIA
CATHERINE MARIE LIPPER, OF VIRGINIA
CHAD MICHAEL MADDOX, OF GEORGIA
MARIA TERESA MALAGARI, OF MARYLAND
MASOOD MANASIA, OF MARYLAND
DAVID STEVEN MANNAN, OF VIRGINIA
VIRNA MANUEL MANUEL, OF VIRGINIA
ERIKA ELIZABETH MARIANO, OF VIRGINIA
MARIA KORYO MATE–KODJO, OF IOWA
JOHN DEREK MATEUS, OF VIRGINIA
NOBUKO ANIKA KAI KENYATTA MAYBIN, OF ALASKA
ROBIN ELIZABETH MCKAY, OF VIRGINIA
SARAH R. MCLAIN, OF VIRGINIA
JOHN AUGUSTUS MCLAUGHLIN, OF VIRGINIA
YOLANDA W. MCLEOD, OF VIRGINIA
JOHN A. K. MILLER, OF VIRGINIA
JESSIE LYNN MILSTEAD, OF VIRGINIA
ANDREW JOSEPH MINOSKI, OF VIRGINIA
JALITA AYANA FATIMA MOORE, OF CALIFORNIA
SHAIESHA LATISHA MOORE, OF ILLINOIS
JONATHAN MOYSEN, OF VIRGINIA
ANNE MARIE NEWBORG, OF VIRGINIA
ALEXIS LENI NIEVES, OF NEW YORK
EMILY ELIZABETH NISSLEY, OF VIRGINIA
CHUMA OBINNA NNAWULEZI, OF NEBRASKA
TEMIDAYO OLUWO, OF VIRGINIA
WILLIAM ROLAND PATTERSON, OF VIRGINIA
ANGELA D. PATTERSON, OF VIRGINIA
MICAELA LYNN PAWLAK, OF VIRGINIA
JEREME PAUL PEDERSEN, OF VIRGINIA
C. JAMES PERANTEAU, OF NEVADA
CAITLIN LEIGH PERKS, OF VIRGINIA
STANISLAS PHANORD, OF MASSACHUSETTS
ALEKSANDAR POPOV, OF VIRGINIA
SHELLEY M. PRICE, OF VIRGINIA
ERIN LYNN RAYL, OF VIRGINIA
ANDREW P. REEL, OF VIRGINIA
HIRAM JAVIER RIOS HERNANDEZ, OF FLORIDA
VERONICA LYNNE RISNER, OF VIRGINIA
MARION DEBERNIERE ROBERTSON III, OF VIRGINIA
WILLARD SCOTT ROSENER, OF VIRGINIA
ERIC SALGADO, OF CONNECTICUT
SPENCER ASHLEY SALIBUR, OF NEW YORK
CHARLES J. SCHILDECKER, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL RAY SEIFERT, OF VIRGINIA
TALIA E. SHABAT, OF VIRGINIA
TARA ALINE SHAUGHNESSY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FELICIA LAVITA SHERROD, OF VIRGINIA
GURJAS SINGH, OF VIRGINIA
JAGMANPREET SINGH, OF VIRGINIA
MEAGAN NICOLE SKILLAS, OF VIRGINIA
LAURA VALERIA SOLANO, OF FLORIDA
JARRETT BLAKE SOUTER–KLINE, OF CALIFORNIA
KATRINA LACEY SPRINGER, OF NEW YORK
JONATHAN GORDON SPRINGER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MELANIE KATHLEEN ST. CLAIR, OF COLORADO
MICHAEL C. STEWART, OF VIRGINIA
NICHOLAS RYAN STONE, OF VIRGINIA
BRENDAN SETH TAUBMAN, OF VIRGINIA
LAURA ELIZABETH THOMAS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MATTHEW HUTTON TONKIN, OF VIRGINIA
DANTE RENATO TOPPO, OF OREGON
DOUGLAS ANTHONY TRABANDT, OF VIRGINIA
JOSHUA JACOB TRINIDAD, OF NEW YORK
INDIA R. TURNER, OF VIRGINIA
COLLINS PATRICK TYNAN, OF VIRGINIA
ANDY VO, OF MASSACHUSETTS
JILL MARIE WAGNER, OF VIRGINIA
RUSSELL C. WATERS, OF VIRGINIA
KATHERINE VIRGINIA WALCZAK, OF VIRGINIA
ADAM CHARLES WALESIEWICZ, OF VIRGINIA
LYNDSEY REBECCA WEBB, OF VIRGINIA
JOSEPH RAY WEBSTER, OF VIRGINIA
ANNELIESE WELSH, OF VIRGINIA
ANTHONY SCOTT WHITE, OF VIRGINIA
GENA MARIE WIGGINS, OF VIRGINIA
STEPHANIE P. WILSON, OF VIRGINIA

THE FOLLOWING–NAMED CAREER MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR PROMOTION WITHIN THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER:

JOHN R. BASS II, OF VIRGINIA
JOHN D. FEELEY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JUDITH G. GARBER, OF VIRGINIA
SUNG Y. KIM, OF VIRGINIA

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate November 1, 2017:

THE JUDICIARY

JOAN LOUISE LARSEN, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF TORT LAW'S SECOND ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the American Museum of Tort Law, located in Winsted, CT, which celebrated its second anniversary on September 25, 2017. In honor of its history and continued importance as a national educational institution, I would like to commemorate the museum and celebrate this milestone.

Since its founding by Ralph Nader, the American Museum of Tort Law has attracted national acclaim from media outlets including Politico, the New Yorker, the Boston Globe and the Washington Post. Its vital importance to our citizenry has been recognized by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Thousands of people have attended the museum and have come away educated, entertained, and impressed by its presentation.

The mission of this unique institution is to educate, inform, and inspire Americans about their legal system, with a focus on the right of trial by jury and the benefits of tort law. Through school group visits, self-guided tours, quality curated programing, and its website, the museum has shown true dedication towards the fostering of greater civic knowledge and awareness.

Moving forward, the museum has an ambitious plan to expand, including not just on-site operations, but broadening its reach by traveling across the country and becoming a resource for practitioners, judges, and legal scholars.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to personally visit the American Museum of Tort Law. As a former history teacher, I can attest to the tremendous value this museum provides through the details and historical context that brings to life the law and justice. Tort law has improved the lives of so many and this museum tells that story.

I am proud to have such an exciting and important institution located in my district. Congratulations to the American Museum of Tort Law on celebrating its second anniversary. May it continue to educate and inspire for generations to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF LTC JOSEPH McGRATH AND HIS INDUCTION INTO THE WISCONSIN MILITARY ACADEMY HALL OF FAME

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize LTC Joseph McGrath for his induction into the Wisconsin Military Academy Hall of Fame. LTC McGrath's long and distinguished career is highlighted by the numerous accolades and successes he achieved during his service in the United States Army and Wisconsin Army National Guard.

LTC McGrath has been an integral factor in protecting America's security interests here at home, while also spreading peace around the world. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, LTC McGrath deployed to Nicaragua to help ensure the security of the Nicaraguan President and establish the future success of the joint Wisconsin-Nicaragua partnership.

In 2004, LTC McGrath was deployed to Afghanistan to direct operations in support of the Kandak ETT comprised of American and Coalition partners. LTC McGrath was also instrumental in providing direct liaison with the UN Ballot Counting teams, while also coordinating physical security for the provincial ballot collection compound during the Afghan Presidential election.

Upon his return to the United States, LTC McGrath's leadership led to the creation of the Warrant Officer Candidate School at the 426th Regiment, a fiscally responsible move that brought greater strength and security to Wisconsin.

LTC McGrath received the Bronze Star, among many other awards, for his honorable service and dedication to our country. LTC McGrath's commitment and courage have left a profound impact on the men and women he led and served with across the world, as well as continued security of our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members of this body to join me in commending LTC Joseph McGrath for his dedicated military service and congratulate his induction into the Wisconsin Military Academy Hall of Fame.

TRIBUTE TO THE SOUTHEAST POLK WRESTLING TEAM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Southeast Polk Wrestling team for winning the Iowa High School 3A State Wrestling Team Championship and the Class 3A State Wrestling Dual Championship.

I would like to congratulate each member of the team:

Wrestlers: Mark Ames, Cam Baarda, Gavin Babcock, Zach Barnes, Josh Barron, Levi Brand, Thaddeus Breitsprecker, Adam Brown, Gabe Christenson, Cade DeVos, Grant Dishinger, Devin Harmison, Nate Lendt, Gauge Perrien, Nathan Robillard, Joe Rowland, Sawyer Shaw, Ryan Strickland, Brady Wenner, Cody Wonderlich

Head Coach: Jason Christenson

Coaches: Jessman Smith, Jeff Evans, Jake Helvey, Jesse Smith, Eric Morrow, Pat Wilson, Tom Koch, Jeremy Dove, Grant Schmidt

Mr. Speaker, by winning two championships at this year's state tournament, this team and their coaches demonstrates the rewards of hard work, commitment, and determination. I am honored to represent each of them in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them for competing in this rigorous competition and wishing them all nothing but continued success.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—BARBARA BECKWORTH

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Barbara Beckworth, a community activist in Dixon, California, and small business owner with a heart of service and a strong desire to help others. She has been involved in nearly every organization and club in the Dixon area and has served in many leadership roles.

Barbara's commitment and love for her community as a leader is reflected by her involvement in several committees and organizations. She was past Chair and Member of the Governmental Affairs Committee where she continues to moderate the candidate's forums, she sits on several scholarship committees for the students at Dixon High School, and she's also served as past president for the Dixon Chamber of Commerce and Dixon Downtown Business Association. Her desire to make Dixon a better place didn't stop there. She also is past president of Lambtown USA and is involved every year in the annual Dixon May Fair Parade.

Barbara is a true civic leader. There are many words to describe Barbara: graceful, elegant, beautiful, but most of all she is simply the nicest person one would ever meet. She was honored with the Dixon Citizen of the Year in 1989 and is considered an icon in Dixon who is loved by all who know her. Barbara is also known for her beloved dress shop that was in Downtown Dixon for many years.

TRIBUTE TO RDG PLANNING & DESIGN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate RDG Planning & Design of Des Moines, Iowa for

being named one of the 2016 Businesses of the Year at the Des Moines East and South Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony earlier this year.

The Business of the Year award celebrates a local business that is dedicated to serving their community. RDG Planning and Design has helped to design numerous buildings, landscapes and interiors across the Midwest, but the company's dedication extends beyond their office walls. Their employees help embody one of the company's core principles of giving back to the community. From schools to churches, neighborhood associations to charities and non-profits, you'll find RDG employees devoting their time to making their communities a better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent Iowa businesses like RDG Planning and Design in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them for this outstanding recognition and in wishing them all nothing but continued success.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—BARBARA COTTER

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Barbara (Babs) Cotter of Yuba City, California, who exemplifies the qualities of selfless service and possesses a deep desire to help others in the community.

Barbara Cotter, a retired educator dedicated her entire career doing what she loved best; making a difference in the lives of elementary school children. Her career spanned over a period of 38 years; 33 in the Yuba City Unified School District. As an elementary school teacher, she was inspiring, beloved, and revered by her students and fellow teachers alike.

In 1986, after surviving a life threatening medical diagnosis, she had an overwhelming desire to give back to a community that helped her through her recovery. She became a Reach to Recover coordinator, and eventually a board member for the American Cancer Society. Barbara's heart of service didn't stop there, she also volunteered for the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County, the State Convention Planning Board for Philanthropic Educational Organization, Middle Mountain Foundation, and Girls on the Run.

In 2009, Barbara Cotter was honored with the Caroline S. Ringler Perpetual Service Award for outstanding service to the Museum and has been appointed to a lifetime position on the Museum Commission.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for Roll Call vote 591 on Tuesday, October 31, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call vote 591.

IN RECOGNITION OF MASTER SERGEANT PAUL CONTRERAS

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I, along with my colleague Representative ROBERT WITTMAN, rise today to recognize the twenty-five years that Master Sergeant Paul Contreras has served in the United States Marine Corps. MSgt Contreras is a true patriot who has significantly contributed to the defense of our Nation. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in April, 1992 and was assigned to Recruit Training Center, San Diego, CA. He subsequently attended Marine Combat Training before being transferred to Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, GA where he trained as a Packaging Specialist. Lance Corporal Contreras' first assignment was to Supply Company, 1st Supply Battalion, 1st Service Support Group, Camp Pendleton, CA. Within his first month of this assignment, LCpl Contreras volunteered to deploy in support of OPERATION RESTORE HOPE in Mogadishu, Somalia. Upon completion of this deployment, he was selected to attend Marine Security Guard training, transferring to Marine Security Guard Battalion, Quantico, VA. Upon graduation from this rigorous course, LCpl Contreras' first assignment was to U.S. Embassy Abidjan, Ivory Coast. In July 1995 Cpl Contreras was transferred to U.S. Embassy Santiago, Chile for his second post.

Upon departure from Chile, Sergeant Contreras served with 1st Supply Battalion until early 1998 when he began the process of applying for the Marine Corps' Counterintelligence/Human Intelligence (CI/HUMINT) occupational specialty. Staff Sergeant Contreras was competitively selected to train as a CI/HUMINT Marine, attending school from January to June, 1999. SSgt Contreras' first assignment was with 1st CI/HUMINT Company where he served until being selected to deploy with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit. During this deployment, SSgt Contreras participated in recovery efforts following the bombing of the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen. In 2000, SSgt Contreras returned to 1st CI/HUMINT Company where he served until June, 2001 before being reassigned to 2nd CI/HUMINT Company, Camp Lejeune, NC. During this assignment, SSgt Contreras supported various exercises including BATTLE GRIFFIN in 2002, and deployed in support of combat operations to Kabul, Afghanistan in 2002 and Babil, Iraq in 2004.

In 2006, Gunnery Sergeant Contreras completed his active service to pursue a civilian career but remained committed to the Marine Corps, joining the Select Marine Corps Reserve later that year. His first reserve assignment was with the Marine Forces Pacific G2X office. From 2006 to 2008 Master Sergeant Contreras supported exercises and operational requirements for Marine Forces Pacific. During this same time, MSgt Contreras was a part owner of a small defense contracting company dedicated to the further development and training of Department of Defense CI/HUMINT professionals prior to their deployments into Iraq and Afghanistan. In the fall of 2008, Master Sergeant Contreras returned to the CI/HUMINT school to provide support to the training staff. His next assignment in March 2009 was with Marine Forces Command G2X office. Due to his excellent reputation, MSgt Contreras was requested by name to mobilize with Marine Forces Europe from November 2011 until August 2013 where he served as Counterintelligence Operations Chief. He returned to the United States for assignment to Intelligence Support Battalion, Marine Forces Reserve in Quantico, VA. In his civilian career, MSgt Contreras also joined the Defense Intelligence Agency's Counterespionage Division. He remained on Marine Reserve duty with Bravo Company until November 2014, upon which time he transferred to Individual Ready Reserve Status intending to retire. Recognizing the immeasurable contribution that MSgt Contreras had made to the CI/HUMINT profession, the senior leadership of Intelligence Support Battalion compelled MSgt Contreras to consider withdrawing his retirement request in order to serve one final tour with the Battalion and in February 2016 MSgt Contreras returned to Bravo Company. He subsequently participated in a US Army exercise at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and served as both Company CI/HUMINT Chief and Senior Enlisted Advisor until his retirement in November of 2017. During this same time, MSgt Contreras was hired by the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity in the Office of the Counterintelligence Coordinating Authority where he is able to continue to support his beloved Corps by influencing the development and direction of counterintelligence activities for the Marine Corps into the future.

Mr. Speaker, few can match the dedication and Esprit de Corps that Paul Contreras has displayed over his twenty-five years of service to Corps and country. We wish Paul continued success in his future endeavors. Many thanks to Master Sergeant Contreras. Our Nation has benefited from his outstanding leadership.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—BALJINDER DHILLON

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Baljinder Dhillon of Yuba City, California, who has dedicated her life to education. She currently serves as the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools. Her career began as a fifth-grade teacher at Tierra Buena Elementary School in the Yuba City Unified School District. After earning her master's degree she moved into administration, serving as the assistant principal at Tierra Buena and Barry elementary schools. She later became the principal at Rio Del Oro Elementary in the Plumas Lake Elementary School District.

Dr. Dhillon is dedicated to finding ways to fund programs that benefit teachers, staff and students. She is credited with authorizing cost-saving measures for the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools office by becoming more energy efficient, she's authored proposals to fund the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Grant and

partnered with the four county offices for the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence Early Adopter Grant application.

Dr. Dhillon received her Bachelor of Arts degree, Masters of Education degree in Education leadership and a Doctorate of Education from California State University, Sacramento. She was recognized by the California Superintendents Educational Services Association as Spotlight Leader for November 2016. Dr. Dhillon was also honored for her dedication and commitment by the Sikh Temple Gurdwara of Yuba City at their 37th Annual Nagar Kirtan Sikh Parade.

TRIBUTE TO WILMA HUGHES

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Wilma Hughes of Bedford, Iowa for being named the Lioness of the Year by the Bedford Iowa Lioness Club.

Wilma has been an active member of her community for many years. She is a dedicated church member, helping with bereavement dinners, folding newsletters, Friday night dinner preparations, playing for Sunday services and she's active on church committees. On top of that, she also bakes pies for the American Legion bingo night and volunteers with the Taylor County Fair Booth each year. She worked alongside her husband, Glen, for 48 years at their family farm and raised three children.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent community leaders like Wilma in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize her today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating her for this outstanding recognition and in wishing her nothing but the best.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—ANNA EATON

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Anna Eaton of Vacaville, CA, who exemplifies the qualities of selfless service and possesses a passion for serving our youth. Since 2013, Anna has distinguished herself as the Executive Director of the Vacaville Neighborhood Boys & Girls Club where she helps provide a safe and caring place for youth to learn and grow. During her tenure, she has expanded the program to five sites and significantly enhanced the club's focus on support and mentorship of the members as they are prepared for future life success.

Ms. Eaton was also founder of Starbound Theatre, a recreation based youth program, helping to bring the joyful experience of theatre to the at-risk and diverse youth of Fairfield, Vacaville, American Canyon, Dixon, and Napa. Ms. Eaton also serves in shaping strategic groups within Vacaville Unified School District to address future programs and curriculum, as well as be the catalyst for three youth summits for teens in the Will C. Wood Interact Club. Anna also serves on the Board of Directors for the Vacaville Rotary Club as the Youth Services Director and advisor to the Will C. Wood High School Interact Club.

Anna was born in Vietnam and came to America as a young child with her family as they escaped from Saigon as the United States Forces withdrew. She is a proud mother of four and proud American who dedicates her life to giving back to the country that has afforded her so many opportunities. ''Life is more meaningful when we evolve into a purpose greater than ourselves.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidable detained and had to miss the vote on H.R. 2521, South Carolina Peanut Parity Act. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 591.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—BARBARA GRAHAM

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Barbara Graham of Vacaville, California, who exemplifies the qualities of selfless service and boundless giving of herself to the betterment of others. A woman of great faith, Barbara has been a pillar of the Vacaville community for many years. In the late 80's, she with husband and co-pastor, Willie Graham, founded the Christian Body Life Church in Vacaville where she serves and has served as Sunday School Teacher, Preacher, Choir member, Head of the Women's Department, and servant to any needy family of the congregation.

In 1999, Mrs. Graham answered the call to assist the Vacaville Police Department in establishing resource for victims of domestic violence. This program provides food, clothing, counseling, and many other free referral services in collaboration with city and county services. Since 2013, Barbara has also served as the Chapel Coordinator for David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base where she oversees hospitality and all aspects of daily operation and church services.

Barbara is a Board Member of Safe Quest Solano, a domestic violence shelter for women and their children, and was also integral to establishing the Supervised Visiting Care Program in collaboration with the Solano County Courts to provide safe spaces for troubled families to have visitations and promote positive joint custody child exchanges.

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT RUFUS HONEYCUTT, USMC

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Staff Sergeant Rufus Honeycutt, USMC, for his dedication and commitment to our country. SSG Honeycutt's extraordinary devotion to community and service reflects the best values of Central Texas. He is a fitting and worthy recipient of a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

SSG Honeycutt enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1960, and spent six years proudly defending his country. His military career included wartime deployment with the first combat unit to see action in Vietnam and earned him numerous awards and medals including the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Vietnam Service.

Following his military career, Rufus has served those around him with boundless altruism and exemplary leadership. A profoundly respected pillar of the Round Rock community, SSG Honeycutt has dedicated his time to numerous community organizations, including six years of service on the Round Rock City Council. He continues to support fellow veterans by providing transportation to the VA, working as the Blood Drive Coordinator at Ft. Hood, and much more. He has volunteered countless hours in his community, and has consistently placed his neighbors' needs before his own. For these reasons and many more, his community carne together in 2002 to honor Rufus Honeycutt as Round Rock Citizen of the Year.

SSG Honeycutt is a hero who has devoted his life to defending our freedoms abroad and serving his community at home. Dedicated public servants like him make Central Texas a great place to live. I join his family and friends in saluting his honored work and commitment to our country.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—BECKY MARIGO

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Becky Marigo of Davis, California, who is committed to serving her community and has a clear passion for helping those who are truly in need. Through her work as a program supervisor and case manager at Davis Community Meals and Housing, Ms. Marigo helps homeless individuals find permanent housing. She coordinates with government agencies, private businesses, and charitable organizations in order to provide resources and opportunities to homeless individuals in her community. Her work has helped many individuals to move beyond homelessness and find work providing for themselves.

In Ms. Marigo's work with Davis Community Meals and Housing, she not only addresses the need of a whole community, she also works to ensure that she meets the needs of the individual. With every person she serves,

Ms. Marigo treats them with dignity, compassion, and respect. She has a talent for connecting with isolated individuals and helping them find comfort in their community. Once Ms. Marigo makes a connection with someone, she sees them through to success, ensuring that they have support every step of the way. Ms. Marigo's work helping those in need is a great inspiration and exemplifies what it means to serve your community.

HONORING DEE BRADEN

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dee Braden for her service to the senior citizens of Coles County, Illinois.

On December 31, 2017, Dee will be retiring from the Coles County Council on Aging (CCCA) after 41 years of service. Dee began her career at the CCCA as a Volunteer Recruiter and was soon promoted to the organization's Executive Director. Under Dee's leadership the (CCA was awarded three Illinois Governor Awards for Unique Distinction, one of which came after ten years of research, development, and fundraising that led to the construction of the 25,000 square foot LifeSpan Center in Charleston, Illinois.

I have worked with Dee and the LifeSpan Center staff on several occasions to provide information to my constituents. Dee has always been most helpful and professional. It is clear she loves those she serves at LifeSpan and loves her community.

While serving as the CCCA's Executive Director, Dee simultaneously served her community and its seniors in many other capacities by serving on multiple advisory boards and committees. Dee has been a true champion in her efforts to enhance the quality of life for older adults in her community.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Dee nothing but the best in her retirement and thank her for her many years of dedicated service.

A LIFE WELL-LOVED IS A LIFE WELL LIVED

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Albert O. Orta for his selfless service to our nation.

Albert Orta's extensive career began in 1947 after completion of his entry level training at Lackland Air Force Base as a member of the United States Air Force. There, he tracked and noted weather cycles. Soon thereafter, he was promoted to work on the base's radar and communication equipment as an electronics technician.

After his service with the United States Air Force, Mr. Orta continued to serve his country as an engineer with the United States Department of Defense at Lackland Air Force Base. His talents for engineering were well recognized and his responsibilities increased. Early in his career, he found himself traveling to well over fifty countries briefing Commanding Generals and U.S Embassy Ambassadors on communicative data and command post installation projects on behalf of the United States Military. His missions took him to Europe, the Philippines, Indo-China and to countries in Africa and South America, just to name a few.

Mr. Orta also worked on military aircraft as a radar engineer and found himself assisting on the improvements and installation of radar systems in the early B series military aircraft: B29, B36, B47 and B52. Mr. Orta's work was so noted as a leader and accomplished engineer that he was assigned to equipping and testing radar systems in the early F series military aircraft: F84, F86A, F89, F102 and F106. His proud accomplishment was his role as the lead engineer in the development and installation of new radar technology for the United States Air Force's F102 Delta Dagger, a $6 million project at the time of his assignment.

Mr. Orta's outstanding accomplishments and his willingness to serve our nation faithfully and to the best of his abilities in all positions was recognized by President Jimmy Carter and a host of Generals and Ambassadors acknowledging his incredible service to our nation through his work with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Albert Orta and Mary Louise Guerrero married in June of 1949 and are blessed with 12 children, 31 grandchildren, and 29 great-grandchildren. Throughout his career and travels he recognized that sharing stories of his travels were important life lessons. There is no greater devotion of a father who returned home from a mission to share the experiences he encountered of a different life, different culture and hardships to emphasize the importance of hard work, the importance of quality education, to learn to be resilient and to appreciate the freedoms we enjoy today. He stands proud that his children and grandchildren are successful in their own professional careers; some educators, leaders in the private industries, medical field, financial advisors, some with a heart for public service and some who proudly served our country in the military.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in honoring Albert O. Orta for his distinguished career and his proud service to our country; and to Mary Louise Orta for her service in standing alongside her husband, supporting him and their family throughout his missions.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN ANDERSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate John Anderson of Minburn, Iowa, who, along with his cousin, Andy Anderson of Cedar Falls, Iowa, became the first Iowans to climb to the summit of Mount Everest on the North Face.

John and Andy have been climbing and hiking for over 10 years. When they decided to tackle the largest mountain in the world over a year ago, they began their training between heavy work schedules, preparing their bodies and minds for the physical and mental challenges such a climb presents. On the afternoon of May 21, all of their preparation paid off when they announced on their Facebook page that they had reached an elevation of 29,052 feet, the summit of Mt. Everest. Alongside the goal of just conquering the tallest mountain in the world, the cousins also used the opportunity to help raise awareness for veterans with PTSD. They plan to use the network they built in promoting this climb to help veterans and their families learn to use outdoor activities to help manage stress.

Mr. Speaker, I am immensely proud of John and his cousin Andy for conquering the largest mountain in the world. I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating John and Andy for this outstanding accomplishment and in wishing them both nothing but continued success.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—BRYNDA STRANIX

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brynda Stranix of Yuba City, California, a pillar of the community who exemplifies the qualities of a true public servant. She is a proven leader who embodies a passion to help others. Brynda currently serves as President and Chief Operating Officer of the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation.

Brynda's passion to help the community thrive is reflected in her present and previous work experience in the field of economics. She joined the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation (YSEDC) in 2001 with 22 years of experience in administrative management, accounting and public relations. Since joining YSEDC, Brynda has worked tirelessly with local businesses as well as public and private community leaders to identify ways to improve and expand business in the area.

Brynda takes great pride in her community; she currently serves in eleven officer roles on boards and commissions for economic development, and is a member of twenty-nine various advisory committees who deal with critical issues from healthcare to homelessness and women's issues. When Brynda is not busy attending a meeting, you will always find her attending a community event.

Brynda was presented with the 2016 Athena Leadership Award for achieving the highest level of professional excellence for her contributions in improving the quality of life for others, especially women, in realizing their full potential. Brynda was born and raised in Yuba City and takes pride in raising three delightful grandsons.

HONORING IOANNIS IOANNOPOULOS

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the important mark that Ioannis Ioannopoulos had on American society, as the original founder of one of the oldest known wooden school houses in the country. In order to fully understand the cultural motivation to establish this historic treasure, one must examine Ioannopoulos's early life. A carpenter by trade, Ioannis Ioannopoulos was the son of George and Maria-Canelas and hailed from the Petalidi area in Messinia that was then known as ''Koroni'' (the village of Skoutari, Mani). He was known by the Spanish as Juan Genopoly. Ioannopoulos—at the age of 13—was one of a group of indentured laborers brought to the New World by Andrew Turnbull to work an indigo plantation at New Smyrna. This group of 1,403 Minorcans, Greeks and Italians suffered mistreatment, starvation and overextended servitudes at Turnbull's plantation. The people were reduced to slavery, and treated with great cruelty by Trumbull, whose partner in the enterprise was the English Governor of the territory, who kept the colonists in subjection with English troops. This slavery lasted nine years, during which time nearly two-thirds of these colonists perished; but large crops of indigo were raised for the company—one year 30,000 lbs. it is stated.

In 1776, a new Governor having arrived, the petitions of these people for relief were listened to, and they were released from the tyranny of their master. One year later six hundred refugees, led by Ioannis Ioannopoulos, Francisco Pellicer and Antonio Llambias, walked to St Augustine and were granted asylum by Governor Tonyn. They became the largest group of immigrants to settle in America in one group at one time. Collectively called ''Minorcans'', they were an important part of the fabric of St. Augustine history. It was on Saint George Street where the survivors of the New Smyrna Colony first settled after their escape. Since that time, this area of Old St. Augustine has been called ''the Greek Quarter'' and alternately ''the Minorcan Quarter.''

Ioannis Giannopoulos built a little house out of red cedar and cypress and put it together with wooden pegs and handmade nails, sometime around 1800. This building was a home first but, as early as 1811, members of the Genopoly family taught the children of other Minorcan families in the first floor ''schoolroom'' of this building. As the story goes, Genopoly, in typical Greek fashion, was worried his children would grow up without an education. Genopoly and his daughter Maria Manuela Barbara ''Mary'' Genopoly Darling were the first teachers. Then Genopoly hired a school teacher, and generations of children from St. Augustine went to school in this building. Juan Genopoly died in 1820.

Today, this preserved building is recognized as one of the oldest schoolhouses in North America. It has become the symbol of their hard work and perseverance. It's now the main attraction of the historical precinct in St. George Street, Saint Augustine, Florida. John Giannopoulos left a deep imprint in the educational history of St. Augustine by establishing a school in his house. Now restored, it stands as one of the oldest school buildings in the United States.

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER—AMANDA WALSH

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Amanda Walsh of Davis, California, who embodies the values of a great teacher, educator, and mentor, and displays unparalleled dedication to her work. For Ms. Walsh, teaching is not just a job, but a calling. As an educator at Pioneer Elementary school, she has a positive and lasting impact on the children she teaches every day. Ms. Walsh is dedicated to the overall wellbeing of all students, ensuring that they are safe, fed, and taken care of. She can frequently be found working late to keep parents up to date and involved in their children's education.

Beyond her work in the classroom, Ms. Walsh finds many ways to serve her community. Over the years, she has been actively involved with the Parent Teacher Association and coordinated fundraising efforts for local schools. Ms. Walsh has volunteered her time for the Davis Little League and Davis Legacy Soccer Club.

A mother of three boys, Amanda is always busy, staying involved in her sons' education, music, and sports activities. Between her roles as a mother and a teacher, Amanda is dedicated to the wellbeing and success of children.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL PATRICK J. CHRIST, U.S. ARMY (RETIRED)

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Colonel Patrick J. Christ, U.S. Army, Retired, from Harker Heights, Texas, for his dedication to our country while serving over two decades in the Army. LTC Christ exemplifies what it means to commit his life to his country and community; he is a deserving recipient of a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

LTC Christ has shown sincere dedication throughout his 23 years in the Army. His commitment to serving his country can be seen through his extensive list of medals, including the Southwest Asia Service Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal. In addition to his superb work defending our nation, LTC Christ held important leadership positions in the Military Officers Association of America and the Association of the United States Army.

After retiring from the U.S. Army in 1992, LTC Christ continued to dedicate his time to worthy causes. He has served as a city council member in the city of Harker Heights, on the Board of Directors for Hill Country Transit, and the Chamber of Commerce. LTC Christ lives a life dedicated to other veterans in his area by working closely with the Area Veterans Advisory Committee and by founding the Harker Heights Veterans' Council. LTC Christ is thoroughly involved in many sports organizations in his area, namely the Tri-County Soccer Club and the T.J. Zimmerman Soccer Tournament which he holds leadership positions in, as well as many other soccer associations. LTC Christ has logged hundreds of volunteer hours in many organizations, including as Admiral of the Texas Navy for Governor Rick Perry. Community activists like him make Central Texas a great place to live and work.

I commend LTC Christ for his service to his community and country. I join his family and friends in saluting his dedication to our country, and being an embodiment of Central Texas values.

TRIBUTE TO NEWARK BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER FOR PERFORMING ITS 1,000TH HEART TRANSPLANT

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me as I rise to pay tribute to the Heart Failure Treatment and Transplant program at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center for performing its 1,000th heart transplant.

Founded in 1901, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is a regional care, teaching hospital that provides comprehensive health care services to local communities. Beth Israel is an important referral and treatment center for patients throughout northern New Jersey, and it is one of only two hospitals certified to perform heart transplants in the state. Staffed with more than 800 physicians, 3,200 employees, and 150 volunteers, the hospital serves over 3 million patients each year.

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center has long been a leader in cardiac care. It performed the first heart transplant in New Jersey in 1986. It was the first New Jersey hospital to use extracorporeal membrane oxygenation for babies awaiting transplants, and it pioneered the use of Left Ventricular Assist Devices for heart-transplant patients.

In August, Beth Israel's Heart Failure Treatment and Transplant Program performed its 1,000th heart transplant. Only eleven other centers in the United States have reached this milestone. Newark Beth Israel Medical Center deserves to be recognized for its achievement. I am proud and honored to have this medical center investing in the health care of my constituents and the citizens of the State of New Jersey.

HONORING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2017 ASIAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Asian-American Chamber of Commerce and the recipients of the 2017 Excellence Awards.

The Asian-American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) is dedicated to improving economic development opportunities for Asian Pacific American-owned businesses in the Washington, DC, region. Northern Virginia has a robust international business community and is home to the largest concentration of minority-owned technology firms in the nation.

The AACC and its members contribute greatly to our regional culture as well as to our economic strength and stability. In fact, Asian-American businesses generate more than 52 percent of total revenues generated by all minority owned businesses in this region. In Fairfax County, approximately 25,000 businesses are Asian-owned and generate approximately $9 billion in annual revenue, creating 54,000 jobs.

Each year, the AACC recognizes individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to the Metropolitan Washington community and economy. I am pleased to include in the RECORD the names of the following recipients of the 2017 Excellence Awards:

Member of the Year: Stephanie Shei.

Business of the Year: University of North America, State Farm.

Young Professional of the Year: Jhenileen Libongco.

Citizen/Company of the Year: Jon Peterson, The Peterson Company.

Non-Profit of the Year: AAPIVote.

Asian-American Business Leader: Dr. James S.C. Chao, The Foremost Group.

New Business of the Year: Logos Briosystems.

Chamber Partner: Central Intelligence Agency, Corner Media, MGM.

Mentorship Award: Dr. Gary Jones, Youth for Tomorrow.

Community Leader: Christina Chang, Chiling Tong.

Entrepreneurship of the Year: Terry Hsaio, Hook Mobile, Inc.

Chairman and President's Award: Haiwen Mackleer, Capital Bank.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2017 Excellence Awards and in commending the AACC for its work to support all Asian-American owned businesses throughout our region.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH AND WEST VIRGINIA CARING

HON. DAVID B. McKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to November as being National Hospice and Palliative Care Month and to recognize a passionate steward of a non-profit hospice—West Virginia Caring.

Under the leadership of Ms. Malene Davis, West Virginia Caring's hospice and palliative care has helped citizens in 12 counties receive attentive and respectful care. As we consider the importance of compassionate and dignified care during one's end of life, we must protect the fair and adequate compensation for non-profit hospice and palliative care provider organizations. I continue to be vigilant of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as well as the intermediary contractors who review and recommend reimbursement rates on a case-by-case basis. For our families, friends and the American people, this is an important aspect of our healthcare responsibility.

During this month, I call particular attention to the many physicians, nurses, caregivers and volunteers who offer invaluable patient service under the Medicare Hospice Benefit. I thank them for their skills and for their compassionate care.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ANNANDALE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY FOR ACTION

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA) on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. In 1967, Fred and Emily Ruffing realized that there was a great need for childcare services for low-income and working poor families who did not qualify for subsidized daycare. They decided that they needed to take action to address this problem so they organized a meeting with representatives from eight local churches to set up a day care center and ACCA was born.

Since 1967, ACCA has continued to grow not only in size but in the number of services provided. What began as a group of eight churches 50 years ago has grown to 26 member congregations. ACCA has also partnered with the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) and its services and programs as well as the model of faith community and government partnership begun by ACCA has been replicated all throughout Fairfax County.

ACCA gives back to the community in a variety of ways. The Child Development Center (CDC) provides both developmental childcare and early childhood education to over 200 toddlers, preschoolers and infants. The ACCA Pantry collects from churches, schools, community groups and local businesses and delivers food and other necessities on an emergency basis to area households. ACCA's Emergency Assistance program handles financial emergencies such as payment for rent, utilities, prescription drugs, and minor car repairs for low-income families who have few resources to fall back on in a time of crisis.

The 26 partner ministries provide a safety net while the families recover stability. Furniture ministry volunteers collect and distribute gently used furniture to needy recipients, while volunteers from the Transportation ministry provide rides to medical appointments. Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver meals every weekday to elderly residents who cannot fend for themselves. ACCA volunteers also spend a Saturday in April repairing houses—more than 110 homes have been repaired or rehabilitated since 1990. With the exception of the CDC, all of these services are provided by volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the staff and volunteers of ACCA and in congratulating them on this incredible milestone. Civic engagement is the foundation of a healthy community, and Fairfax County residents enjoy an exceptional quality of life due in part to the efforts of these individuals. Their contributions have been a great benefit to our community and truly merit our highest praise.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAC THORNBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, October 31, I was unable to be in Washington and missed Roll Call vote No. 591, To amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to include South Carolina as a part of the Virginia/Carolina peanut producing region for purposes of appointment to the Peanut Standards Board. Had I been present, I would have voted yes.

RECOGNIZING MARY BETH COYA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize someone who has had a profound impact on the Northern Virginia community, Ms. Mary Beth Coya. I have been proud to partner with Mary Beth on many issues of importance to the residents of Northern Virginia and the quality of life we enjoy, and I consider her a good friend. This year marks 30 years since Mary Beth Coya began her career with the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR), beginning in 1987 as a Legislative Assistant. During her career, she has steadily advanced and currently serves as the Senior Vice President of Government and Public Affairs for NVAR.

Prior to joining NVAR, Mary Beth began her career as a staff member with the Virginia House of Delegates Appropriations Committee in Richmond. From there she took her passion for advocacy to the private sector, where she lobbied at both the state and federal levels for a variety of associations and companies. Throughout her career, Mary Beth has used her knowledge and experience to advocate for policies that would improve the lives of the members of her community. This has perhaps most been felt in the area of transportation, where she serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance (NVTA), a business-citizen coalition focused on advancing highway and transit projects of major importance to the region.

I have worked with Mary Beth and the NVTA on efforts to construct the Silver Line Metrorail extension and the establishment of the Virginia Railway Express commuter rail system. In fact, NVTA was the first private sector organization to call for a dedicated funding source for Metro, which is a goal that I share.

Mary Beth's career with NVAR and her role as a Board Member for the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance are inextricably intertwined. At NVAR, she has been an experienced and expert advocate for the advancement of major legislation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She was instrumental in obtaining dedicated regional and statewide transportation funding and has a passion for protecting the real estate industry. Due to her strong relationships with elected leaders at all levels of government and her extensive historical knowledge of the region, she has been an effective voice in ensuring that Northern Virginia remains one of the best places in the country in which to live, work, play, and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mary Beth Coya on the occasion of her 30th Anniversary with the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors and in commending her for her dedication to the betterment of our region. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to partner with her and NVAR on numerous issues and I look forward to continuing to work with her going forward.

TRIBUTE TO DEIDRE DEJEAR

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Deidre DeJear on being named the Iowa Small Business Administration Minority Business Champion of the Year.

Each year, during National Small Business Week, the Iowa Small Business Administration announces winners of the Iowa Small Business Week Awards. Deidre is the president of the business marketing company Caleo Enterprises. She's also a passionate advocate for low- to moderate-income individuals and families, helping to strengthen their financial opportunities and knowledge. She led the United Way of Central Iowa's Financial Capability project, where since 2012 over 20,000 people have gained access to financial systems and improved their financial management skills. Deidre has created several programs to provide financial and business education in Central Iowa, among which three ''boot camps'' have seen 1,300 people come and learn about finances, business and non-profits.

Mr. Speaker, strong communities are built upon people like Deidre, who go above and beyond their own self-interests and devote their time and energy to helping others. It is an honor to represent leaders like her in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize her today. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Deidre on this outstanding recognition and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING EILEEN CURTIS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an individual who has had a tremendous impact on Northern Virginia. Eileen Curtis, President and CEO of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, is retiring after leading the Chamber since 1994.

During her tenure, the Dulles Chamber has established itself as one of the leading business advocacy groups in the region, adding to the quality of life for our residents in the Dulles Corridor and beyond. I have been proud to work with the Chamber on a host of issues, perhaps most significant being Rail to Dulles. The Chamber was instrumental in the foundation of the Dulles Corridor Rail Association, which helped lobby for federal funding which was eventually secured to help construct the Silver Line. The 23-mile long Silver Line has spurred major economic development along the Dulles Corridor and has been singled out by Fairfax County executives as one of the main reasons behind Fairfax County's continued economic success.

In addition to Rail to Dulles, Eileen has worked with the Chamber to enhance the region in other ways including advocating for STEM education in our schools, forging partnerships with the business and education communities, creating greater opportunities for our immigrant community, and establishing new local festivals and events to bring the community together. These efforts are among the many reasons why Northern Virginia is routinely recognized as one of the best places in the United States in which to live, work, raise a family, and start a business.

Eileen's efforts have been drawn recognition from across the region. The Chamber's efforts in education have been honored by Fairfax County Public Schools on multiple occasions and the Washington Business Journal routinely lists the Dulles Chamber as being one of the largest in membership. Eileen herself has been recognized as Woman of the Year by the Herndon Business & Professional Women and as Executive of the Year by the Virginia Association of Chambers of Commerce Executives. These accolades speak to the strength of Eileen as a leader and the dedication that she has shown to our community. There can be no doubt of the positive impact that she has had on our community and our region is better for her efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Eileen Curtis on her retirement and in thanking her for her outstanding service to Fairfax County and Northern Virginia. While she may be retiring, I am confident that she will remain engaged on the issues that are close to her heart. I wish her great success in all her future endeavors.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF FIREFIGHTER ROBERT ''SKIPPY'' TILEARCIO

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of longtime New York City Firefighter Robert ''Skippy'' Tilearcio, who passed away last Wednesday from a malignant tumor resulting from his months of recovery efforts at Ground Zero.

Skip was a tireless advocate for the Zadroga 9/11 Healthcare Act. He came to Washington about six times to fight for its extension in 2014 and 2015, even before he was diagnosed with a fatal tumor. I had the privilege of meeting Skip Tilearcio when he would make these painful trips to Congress. On his final visit Skip was confined to a wheelchair but his spirit was as strong as ever. Skip truly personified the courage of New York's Bravest.

Skip Tilearcio was the 15th firefighter to die this year alone from a 9/11 related illness. Many more are sick and suffering from these dreaded 9/11 illnesses. But because of Skip Tilearcio's heroic and successful effort to extend the Zadroga Act, these brave first responders will receive the very best medical care and treatment. My sincerest condolences go out to his wife Tina and his two children Tatiana and Robert. R.I.P. Firefighter Robert ''Skip'' Tilearcio.

RECOGNIZING DANIEL DUNCAN

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my good friend Daniel (Dan) Duncan as he steps down after serving for 10 years as President of the Northern Virginia Labor Federation, AFL–CIO (NoVA Labor.) As President of NoVA Labor, Dan led the largest labor council in the Commonwealth of Virginia and which represents nearly 70 unions and locals. In this role, he has been responsible for consolidating the missions and concerns of the various unions and their members into one unified voice while ensuring that all opinions are heard and respected.

Dan has dedicated his life to improving the lives of working families. He is committed to the mission of NoVA Labor which is to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our communities. He learned these values from an early age—his grandfather was a shop steward at a shipyard in Cleveland, Ohio and his father was a rank and file Machinist. Dan joined his first union, the Retail Clerks Union, in 1973 at the age of 17 while working for a grocery store in Tennessee.

After graduating from the University of Chattanooga in 1978, Dan worked as a newspaper reporter. He later became director of the Fort Lauderdale senior employment program with the National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC) which was formed in 1961 and evolved from the Senior Citizens for Kennedy organization. Working with the administration

of President John F. Kennedy, the NCSC was instrumental in rallying support for comprehensive health insurance for senior citizens. These efforts bore fruit when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Medicare into law in 1965. NCSC's efforts were instrumental in passing this landmark legislation and the organization, now known as the Alliance for Retired Americans continues its fight to protect and preserve Medicare and Social Security.

Dan then accepted a position with the Seafarers International Union where he has served for 30 years in various positions. For the last six years, Dan has held the position of Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Maritime Trades Department.

In his roles with individual unions as well as with the Northeast Florida Central Labor Council, the Northern Virginia Central Labor Council, and the NoVA Labor Federation, Dan has worked tirelessly to advocate for working families and support state and federal legislation that would even the playing field for the backbone of our society—the middle and lower class who deserve a fair wage for honest work and other employer related benefits.

I have personally known Dan Duncan and his wife Karen for many years and have thoroughly enjoyed our countless conversations and discussions on issues of importance. While we have on occasion disagreed, mainly on their terrible taste in baseball teams, but also occasionally on the best way to achieve a certain objective, we both know and understand that we share the same goals. These exchanges of ideas and opinions have been invaluable to both of us as we continue to represent and serve our constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending Dan Duncan for his efforts on behalf of the working men and women of our country and in thanking him for his service. Although he is stepping down from his position of President of NoVA Labor, I am confident that he will continue his efforts to strengthen and protect the rights and benefits of all and I wish him success in all of his future endeavors.

2017 DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I take this time to recognize the 2017 Distinguished Citizen Award recipients, presented annually by the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council. To commemorate this special occasion, the organization hosted a celebratory event on Thursday, November 2, 2017, at Gamba Ristorante in Merrillville, Indiana.

Since 1992, the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council has presented the Distinguished Citizen Award to individuals whose efforts have had significant positive impacts on their communities in Northwest Indiana and across the state. This year, the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council honored Tom Sourlis and Susan Eleuterio.

Tom Sourlis is the founder and chairman of Mortar Net Solutions, located in Burns Harbor. Mortar Net, a product invented by Tom, prevents mortar droppings from clogging weepholes designed to allow water to exit a building wall. Mortar Net Solutions is a tremendously successful company, and the product is currently used on cavity wall construction throughout North America. In addition to his remarkable career, Tom dedicates much of his time and support to charitable endeavors throughout Northwest Indiana including Tradewinds, the Crisis Center, Parents as Teachers, and the Porter County Community Foundation. For his outstanding devotion to such causes, Tom is worthy of this great honor.

Susan Eleuterio is currently a faculty member of Goucher College's Master's in Cultural Sustainability program in Baltimore, Maryland. She has established an extensive and impressive background that consists of many titles including independent folklorist, author, educator, activist, and consultant to non-profit organizations. Sue's extraordinary contributions to her community, however, are not limited to academia. She is active in her support for causes that improve the quality of life for others and encourage the protection of human rights, lending her time and talents to the Crossroads Fund. This organization, which is focused on the ideal that fundamental change occurs from humble, grassroots beginnings and supports efforts throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana, benefits from the passion for justice, equality, and the academic knowledge Sue offers as a member of the Board of Directors, as the arts and the human condition are often intertwined. For these reasons, Sue is worthy of the commendation bestowed upon her.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council and its 2017 Distinguished Citizen Award recipients, Tom Sourlis and Susan Eleuterio. For their lifetime of leadership and tireless dedication to their communities, Tom and Susan are worthy of the highest praise.

RECOGNIZING ELLUCIAN OF RESTON, VIRGINIA ON ITS GRAND OPENING

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ellucian on the occasion of the grand opening of its new office space in Reston, Virginia. Based in Fairfax County since 1987, the opening of this new headquarters location speaks to the growing presence of technology companies in not only Fairfax County, but the Dulles Corridor as a whole. We are continually reminded of why this area is rapidly developing a reputation as the Silicon Valley of the East.

Established in 2012 by the merger of Datatel and SunGard Higher Education, Ellucian and its parent companies have been serving the higher education community since 1968. What began as a single office has expanded into 20 regional offices employing over 2,900 individuals all over the world.

As a former member and Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, I know firsthand that the quality of life we enjoy in Fairfax County is directly tied to the strength of our education system. This is especially true when it comes to higher education. Providing the gateways for students to succeed is essential and I commend the staff of Ellucian for working to create and maintain those opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, to prepare the leaders of tomorrow, institutions of higher education must have the services, tools, and technologies to engage and foster student success. For nearly fifty years, Ellucian has provided support to these institutions in order for them to achieve their goals. It is critical that our nation focus our sight on improving student outcomes to better compete in the world economy and I thank Ellucian and its dedicated staff for their efforts in this area. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ellucian on the grand opening of its new headquarters and in wishing it great success in all future endeavors.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL GERY BRENT TRUITT, U.S. ARMY (RETIRED)

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Colonel Gery Brent Truitt, U.S. Army Retired, of Harker Heights, Texas, for his dedication to our country while serving 25 years in the Army. LTC Truitt exemplifies what it means to commit his life to his country and has more than earned our admiration and respect. He is a deserving recipient of a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

Upon his commissioning as a Second Lieutenant from Sam Houston State University in 1979, LTC Truitt began his military career as an Infantry Officer with the Texas National Guard and then entered the United States Army. As Lieutenant, he conducted more combat patrols inside the Korean demilitarized zone than any other officer in the 2nd Infantry Division, and as Major, he served in a variety of 5th Special Forces Group assignments. Just prior to being promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, he was diagnosed with terminal colon cancer, which he successfully overcame in the next year. LTC Truitt used that time to revive the Columbus State University ROTC Program as a professor in Military Science.

This brave soldier is also a committed citizen. Following his military career, he continued to support the military in the Central Texas Special Forces Association. As President, he is responsible for an annual raffle that raises thousands of dollars annually to support homeless veterans' programs and local nonprofit organizations to meet immediate community needs. His work to make his community a great place to live and work have made lasting and positive impacts on the region.

I commend LTC Truitt's selfless service to his community and nation. His dedication to our country and community reflects the best values of central Texas. I join his family and friends in saluting his great work and dedication to our country.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF FAIRFAX WATER

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Fairfax Water on the occasion of its 60th anniversary. There are few human needs more precious and more critical than access to fresh and safe drinking water. Indeed, we have seen what can happen when those needs are neglected, as the tragedy in Flint, Michigan reminds us. Prior to the creation of the Fairfax County Water Authority (now known as Fairfax Water), water was supplied to Fairfax County through many small, mostly private water systems, and a limited number of public systems. There was no standardization between systems and each system maintained its own rate schedule and level of service. In order to improve service reliability, establish equitable rates, and provide effective fire protection throughout Fairfax County, the Board of Supervisors created Fairfax Water in September 1957 for the purpose of ''acquiring, constructing, operating and maintaining an integrated water system for supplying and distributing water.''

The acquisition of water systems began in 1959 with the purchase of the Annandale Water Company. Over the next eight years, Fairfax Water acquired an additional 17 systems and began to build a comprehensive water-supply system. By the end of 1967, Fairfax Water had 832 miles of mains, 3,354 fire hydrants, and 54,000 metered accounts serving more than 425,000 people. By 1982, that number had grown to more than 1,800 miles of mains, more than 10,300 fire hydrants and nearly 126,000 metered accounts serving more than 650,000 people. By 1994, it would reach more than 2,700 miles of water mains, more than 17,300 fire hydrants and more than 197,300 meters.

Those numbers show a county undergoing tremendous growth in both population and urbanization. The challenges associated with that are numerous and the temptation of providing service while overlooking the quality of that service is real. However, Fairfax Water has never allowed itself to fall into that trap. Instead, it has approached every new challenge with its mission in mind: providing safe, clean drinking water to Fairfax County residents and ensuring that the County's water supply is maintained. There have certainly been no shortage of challenges—from supply issues stemming from the use of a single source (the Occoquan River) to natural disasters to the threat of terrorism, Fairfax Water has risen to meet those challenges. Its work stands as testament to the strength and character of the ethos of public service in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Phillip Allin, Charles Murray, the members of the Board of Directors and the entire staff of Fairfax Water. I thank them for their service to our community and for maintaining the proud legacy of this organization while adapting it to meet the challenges of the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN YODER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 591 on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2521—the South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017, I am not recorded because I was home in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted aye.

TRIBUTE TO CAPITAL CHIROPRACTIC AND REHABILITATION CENTER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Capital Chiropractic & Rehabilitation Center of Des Moines, Iowa for being named one of the 2016 Businesses of the Year at the Des Moines East and South Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony earlier this year.

The Business of the Year award celebrates a local business that is dedicated to serving their community. Since Dr. Chris LoRang launched Capital Chiropractic & Rehabilitation Center in 2013, it has won numerous awards for the service they provide in family and sports medicine to people of all ages. The clinic encourages employees to be active in the community, and you can find them involved in organizations around the area, including neighborhood associations, school foundations, chamber of commerce council's and chiropractic societies.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent local businesses like Capital Chiropractic & Rehabilitation Center in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them for this outstanding recognition and in wishing them all nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OAKTON LIBRARY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Oakton Library on the occasion of its 10th anniversary. This project represents the fulfillment of a promise I made to this community more than a decade ago, during my time as both Providence District Supervisor and Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Working with engaged citizens, we identified a need for new meeting space as well as a new library in the Oakton community. But we didn't stop there. We rolled up our sleeves and went to work. We worked with developers to secure the necessary land, with my colleagues on the Board to secure and pass the necessary bond referendums and with the community to raise awareness and support for this necessary addition. These efforts bore fruit and in 2007 we celebrated the dedication of the new Oakton Library. Ten years later, the library stands as a pillar of the Oakton community and I am confident that it will continue to serve that role for many more decades to come.

I wish to give special recognition to the members of the Friends of Oakton Library, who worked with myself and others side by side on every step of this project. Together, we guided what was once just a concept into a brick-and-mortar reality.

We are incredibly fortunate in Fairfax County to have such dedicated citizens, who go out of their way for the betterment of the lives of others. I have often said that local government is where the rubber meets the road. The level of accountability is absolute. You either solved the problem or you didn't . . . and everyone knows where you live and has your phone number! My colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and I accomplished a lot together during my time in Fairfax County government, but the completion of the Oakton Library remains one of my proudest moments in local government. A testament to what can happen when like-minded individuals are willing to back up their words and desires with concrete, often unglamorous actions. The Oakton community and indeed all of Fairfax County is better off today because people were willing to put in the work.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Friends of Oakton Library and the entire Oakton community on this important anniversary. I commend them for their contributions to Fairfax County and wish them great success in all their future endeavors. I am confident that we will be observing many more anniversaries of this library still to come.

RETIREMENT OF MAYOR RAYMOND BODNAR

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a remarkable public servant from my district, Mayor Raymond G. Bodnar of Munhall, Pennsylvania, who is retiring after 53 years of service to his community.

Mr. Bodnar has been the Mayor of Munhall Borough for the last 30 years, but his service to his nation and community began long before that. As a young man, he served in the Army during the Korean Conflict and was honorably discharged in 1955. In addition to working for 40 years for the U.S. Steel Corporation, he served eight years as auditor of Munhall and another fifteen as a member and then President of the Munhall Borough Council. In 1987, he was elected mayor, a position which he has honorably filled for the last three decades, and in which he has worked tirelessly to improve the Munhall community.

During his career, Mayor Bodnar has supported and secured funding for such important projects as developing the Munhall waterfront, revitalizing the town's Main Street, modernizing the police department, and introducing public safety and crime prevention programs.

Beyond his duties as a civil servant, he has also given back to his community in countless ways, including managing the youth Munhall Baseball League, organizing summer athletic programs, working with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and church groups, and teaching local government to youth groups and schools. He is also a member of a number of community service organizations, including Knights of Columbus No. 2201, the Catholic War Veterans Association, the Homestead Elks, and the Steel Valley Salvation Army Board ofDirectors.

For more than 50 years, Raymond Bodnar has demonstrated wholehearted dedication to public service and community involvement, and I think that we can all learn something from his example. I wish to congratulate the mayor on his retirement and commend him for his lifetime of devotion to the Munhall community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TODD ROKITA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on October 31, 2017 as my flight to Washington D.C. was delayed and prevented me from being on the House floor in time.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 591.

RECOGNIZING THE 26TH ANNUAL BEST OF RESTON AWARDS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE RECIPIENTS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the recipients of the 26th Annual Best of Reston Awards for Community Service. These awards are the result of collaboration between Cornerstones and the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce and are presented to individuals, organizations, and businesses whose extraordinary efforts make our community a better place.

I have been proud to represent this community since my days as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The level of civic engagement celebrated by these awards is a testament to the community spirit of Reston. I have often said that civic engagement is a key indicator of a healthy community and tonight's event proves that Reston is one of the healthiest communities in all of Northern Virginia! That is due in no small part to the actions of those honored here this evening and I extend my congratulations to all of tonight's honorees. I also wish to thank Kerrie Wilson of Cornerstones and Mark Ingrao of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce for their tireless efforts on behalf of others and in making our community one of the best places in the country in which to live, work and raise a family.

It is my honor to include in the RECORD the following recipients of the 2017 Best of Reston Awards:

Corporate/Business Leader:
Odin, Feldman and Pittleman, PC
Small Business Leader:
CST Group
Volunteerism Through Nonprofit Service:
Women Giving Back
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts
Community Leader:
Bill Keefe
Gillian and Vincent Seskoe
Vade Bolton-Ann Rodriguez Legacy Award:
Herb Williams-Bafoe
Robert E. Simon Community Service Award:
Vicky Wingert

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the 2017 Best of Reston honorees for their tremendous contributions. I thank Cornerstones and the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce for continuing this wonderful tradition, and I express my sincere gratitude to these individuals, businesses, and organizations for lending their time and energy to the betterment of our community.

TRIBUTE TO JENNIE BARANCZYK

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Drake Women's Basketball Coach Jennie Baranczyk on being awarded the 2017 Madelyn Levitt Community Service Award.

The Madelyn Levitt Community Service Award is annually presented to Drake University faculty or staff members who have ''demonstrated personal commitment to volunteerism and community service.'' Jennie just completed her fifth season at the helm of the women's basketball team for the Drake Bulldogs, where not only she, but a number of her players, has won numerous awards and recognitions. Off the court, she leads her team in giving back to the community, reaching their annual 1,000 hour goal of community service for four straight years. Organizations throughout the Des Moines area, and the people they serve, have benefited from the team's generous efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent community leaders like Jennie in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize her today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Jennie for this outstanding recognition and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

HONORING CAPTAIN SKIP BLANCETT, USN (RETIRED)

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Captain Skip Blancett, USN, Retired of Salado, Texas. With a career spanning over two decades, CAPT Blancett is a true patriot, a faith-filled citizen, and unquestionably a deserving recipient of a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

CAPT Blancett joined the Navy at age 29 and was stationed in Guam, where he helped fulfill the spiritual needs of others. CAPT Blancett went on to serve his country in eight other stations around the world, with duties ranging from Public Affairs Officer, to teaching a course in the Naval War College, to furthering the spiritual state of his fellow sailors through various tactics with the Chaplain Corps.

CAPT Blancett's love of country is matched only by his commitment to his community. Upon retirement, the call to serve continued to burn inside. CAPT Blancett has gracefully served as Mayor of Salado since 2014 where he has been a champion of the Village's growing economy and its hard-working citizens. He is beloved by the Village of Salado for his leadership, commitment to faith, and passion for his community.

CAPT Blancett serves the people of Salado with the same dedication, honor, and humility with which he served his country. He is an exemplary man who shows the utmost commitment to his family, community, and above all, his faith. May we all follow the example of great men such as CAPT Blancett, and live a life of hard work, loyalty and service to others.

RECOGNIZING DR. CHERIF SADKI AS THE 2017 OUTSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF VIRGINIA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Cherif Sadki, principal of Gar-Field Senior High School, as the 2017 Outstanding High School Principal of Virginia.

Each year, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, which is the seventh largest school administrators' organization in the National Association of Secondary School Principals, selects a principal to represent the state as the nominee for the National Principal of the Year Program.

As the 2017 nominee, Dr. Sadki is commended for his ''creativity and imagination in bringing about positive change, improving the educational program and student achievement; ensuring a school climate that reflects high staff and student morale; and for involving the community in the life of the school.''

At the helm of Gar-Field Senior High School for the past five years, Dr. Sadki has implemented countless policy changes and program adjustments to address the needs of the increasingly diverse student population. Of the roughly 2,500 students enrolled in Gar-Field Senior High School last year, approximately half spoke a language other than English at home. One to never shy away from a challenge, Dr. Sadki rolled up his sleeves, transformed the teaching model, and embedded English instruction into the core curriculum to meet the needs of the diverse student body.

For his foresight, engagement of the community, and commitment to ensuring that all students receive a world-class education, it is my honor to include in the Record, Dr. Cherif Sadki.

Dr. Sadki is the standard-bearer at the regional and national level for educating English learners. He attributes much of his success in

reshaping the mission of Gar-Field Senior High School to the efforts of a supportive community, a focused group of educators, and a dedicated administrative staff. Instead of seeing students who embraced a failing attitude, he saw children who had not been given an opportunity to succeed. Dr. Sadki saw teachers who needed encouragement, training and support and a community that could be convinced that success was possible.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Cherif Sadki, principal of Gar-Field Senior High School on his selection as the 2017 Outstanding High School Principal for Virginia. His leadership and dedication to the students, teachers, and faculty as he works to ensure a bright future for all who pass through the doors of Gar-Field Senior High School is truly commendable and worthy of our highest praise.

HONORING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF MEREDITH COREY-DISCH, OWNER OF COMMUNITY LOAVES

HON. JOHN H. RUTHERFORD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Meredith Corey-Disch, a leader and business owner in my district, who was a recipient of a spot at the James Beard Foundation's Inaugural Class of the Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership Fellowship program. This program, hosted at the prestigious Babson College, aims to help female chefs and owners grow their businesses by cultivating women's leadership in the culinary industry.

Meredith Corey-Disch and her business partner, Sarah Bogdanovitch, are exceptional entrepreneurs. Their business was founded on the belief that it should be local, community focused space that provides organic, traditional foods with shared work and fair pay. ''Community Loaves'' began in 2011 in Jacksonville, as an organic bike-delivered subscription bakery. The pair then opened a bread shop in 2014, where they served all-organic bread and pastries for breakfast and lunch. They kept the business community focused by holding special pizza nights and farm to table dinners in their garden and invited surrounding neighbors to these events.

Meredith began her love of bread making through an apprenticeship in a bakery, while brainstorming ways she could start a business people would enjoy back in her hometown of Jacksonville. She can be described as thoughtful, kind, generous, and creative. With these skills, along with her passion of bread making, Meredith will continue to spread her passion throughout Northeast Florida. We need more creative small business owners like Meredith. She has been a true example of leadership for women in Northeast Florida and I look forward to seeing her future culinary successes.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Meredith Corey-Disch for her leadership in not only the culinary community, but in Northeast Florida as well.

RECOGNIZING RED CREEK HIGH SCHOOL'S BLUE RIBBON AWARD

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding students, faculty, and staff at Red Creek High School. The mission statement of the Red Creek Central School District is to educate students with equity, and help them master fundamental skills. I would like to commend the hard work of the Red Creek Central School District for making Red Creek High School a safe and welcoming place to learn.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private schools based on overall academic excellence or ability in closing achievement gaps among students. Every year the United States Department of Education seeks out, and honors, schools that tirelessly work to help students grow academically. Red Creek High School is one of just 19 New York State schools to receive the prestigious ''Exemplary High Performing Schools'' award from the United States Department of Education this year.

Since the Blue Ribbon Award was first created in 1982, only four other schools in Wayne-Finger Lakes region have garnered Blue Ribbon status. Red Creek High School was awarded its Blue Ribbon Award this year for the strong academic performance of its student body. The teachers and administrators at Red Creek High School work hard each day to make learning exciting, and encourage their students that they can achieve their goals both inside and outside of the classroom. I'm proud to recognize this stellar high school in my district, and applaud the students, parents, administrators and teachers for their efforts.

HONORING ASSISTANT CHIEF MICHAEL SCHRAGE OF THE CRYSTAL CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Assistant Chief Michael Schrage on his 50 years of service as a volunteer firefighter with the Crystal City Fire Department in Crystal City, Missouri. A celebration will be held on November 13, 2017 to honor Assistant Chief Schrage and commemorate his more than 50 years of service starting in 1967.

Born to Robert and Wanda Schrage on September 7, 1953, Mr. Schrage was one of five children. On August 11, 1976, Mr. Schrage married his beloved wife of 39 years, Janet Sue. Janet and Michael had one daughter, Brandi, and have also welcomed into the family Brandi's husband, Daniel and their granddaughter, Audri. In 1975, Mr. Schrage joined the Joachim Plattin Ambulance District. During that same year, he began working with his father, Mr. Robert (Bob) Schrage, at the family business, Schrage Electric. Mr. Schrage earned his certificate in Fire Science Technology from Jefferson College on May 23, 1978. In 1990 when his father retired, Mr. Schrage took over the family business and is still operating it today. Throughout his life, Mr. Schrage has served the Festus, Jefferson R–7, and Crystal City Fire Departments. Since 2009, Mr. Schrage has served as the commissioner for the Festus Special Road District. Additionally, he serves his community as a member of the Twin city Area Chamber of Commerce and Elks Lodge 1721. He also attends Good News Community Church.

Throughout Mr. Schrage's service, he has held the position of Fire Fighter, Captain, and Assistant Chief. Mr. Schrage is currently the Assistant Chief at the Crystal City Fire Department. In 2013, he was given the award of Fire Chief of the Year in Jefferson County. In 2016, he was the Grand Marshall at the Jefferson County Fire Engine Rally and the Crystal City Homecoming.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing Assistant Chief Michael Schrage on 50 dedicated years of service to his community. The commitment he has shown to the Crystal City Fire Department has been greatly appreciated.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast my vote on October 31, 2017 for Roll Call Vote 591. Had I been present, my vote would have been the following: Aye on Roll Call Vote 591.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, on October 31, I was absent for recorded vote No. 591. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

TRIBUTE TO MICHELLE DECLERCK

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Michelle DeClerck on being awarded the Women in Business Champion of the Year by the Iowa Small Business Administration.

Every year, during National Small Business Week, the Iowa Small Business Administration announces winners of the Iowa Small Business Week Awards. Michelle is the founder and president of Conference Event Management in West Des Moines. In its 13 years, Michelle has grown the company across Iowa and around the globe. One of her passions in life is promoting women in business and fostering the growth of women business owners. She devotes her time and energy to several organizations that advocate for, mentors, and

supports women business owners, encouraging them to enter the world of business ownership. She also serves with organizations that focus on aiding the hungry and homeless in Central Iowa.

Mr. Speaker, strong communities are built upon people like Michelle, who go above and beyond their own self-interests and devote their time and energy to helping others. I am honored to represent leaders like her in the United States Congress and I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Michele for receiving this outstanding recognition and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

CELEBRATING THE CITY OF BELL'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the City of Bell on its 90th anniversary. I am deeply honored to represent this city as part of California's 40th Congressional District, and I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Bell and its residents on the city's anniversary.

The foundation of the City of Bell can be traced back to the arrival of the first group of settlers in the mid-1870s. Among the settlers were the city founder James George Bell and his wife and children. They moved to a property on Gage Avenue that is now known as the Bell House. The house is now a historic landmark filled with antique furnishings, vintage clothing, and photographs, and is open for the public to visit.

In 1898, the town's name was officially changed from Rancho San Antonio to Bell, in honor of its pioneer founders. The City of Bell was incorporated in 1927 and is a small, vibrant community composed of young families, small businesses, and an industrial district.

Between 1920 and 1935, Bell experienced a growth spurt where schools, businesses, and community organizations were established, such as the Bell Chamber of Commerce and Bell High School.

Since its incorporation, the city has expanded its facilities, obtained land for public parks and recreational areas, and acquired basic amenities such as a city hall, parks, a fire department building, and a police department.

The city has recently enhanced transparency and accountability within the city government. In 2013, the city's website earned an A− from a non-profit organization that examines state and local government transparency. Through the city website, the public can now watch live streaming council meetings, look up city contracts, view warrant payments and public officials' salaries and compensations, and review budget information.

Over the years, Bell has become a vibrant city with an innovative approach to enhancing its services and infrastructure in order to support its growing community. Bell encourages programs that provide recreational activities and community services, preserve and improve the environment, and protect the safety of Bell residents.

In 2016, the Bell City Council adopted a five-year strategic plan, which outlines the top five targets for the city: economic development, community outreach, public image, developing and improving strong city management, and fiscal sustainability.

Currently, the City of Bell is mostly composed of a large Latino population and a growing Lebanese American community. Bell's commitment to community engagement can be seen through the various programs it offers to youth, adults, and seniors.

Over 700 children are participating in the city's soccer program and parents turn out in large numbers to support their kids. Some parents even become team coaches. The city has also developed new adult sports programs, and has been renovating parks by establishing maintenance procedures for the synthetic fields.

Ernest Debs Park, which is home to the youth soccer program, includes a synthetic soccer field with covered bleachers and a covered fitness zone that are available to residents every day of the week. The largest park in the city is Veterans Memorial Park, which commemorates the contributions of war veterans to our country and our freedom. Veterans Memorial Park includes a veterans monument, a rose garden, a baseball field with stadium seating, two large park pavilions, and batting cages.

Family events such as the city's annual street festival, the Summer Concert Series, and the Bell 5K Run/Walk have also been developed to promote community, health, and fitness in the city. The city's smartphone application has made it possible for its residents to report street improvements, pickup of bulky items, and graffiti removals through the touch of a button.

The new City of Bell Technology Center has provided a safe learning environment where both adults and youth can access computers. This Technology Center provides free after-school computer skills training classes, which include introductions to computer equipment and operation, word processing techniques, e-mail correspondence, and fundamental skills required for safe web access.

As the City of Bell celebrates its 90th anniversary this month, the community will also be celebrating some of the following achievements: a ''Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting'' by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada; the establishment of a Planning Commission; the initiation of a ''Business of the Month'' effort to highlight local businesses; a partnership with the Bell Chamber of Commerce to establish the Bell Family Food Truck Night; and adoption of the city's Strategic Plan and the new city logo.

That new logo is shaped by a bell design, and includes the city's motto: ''Home . . . in the center of it all'' to inspire civic pride and civic engagement in the community.

The City of Bell has made huge strides in the past couple of years and does not show any sign of slowing down. I ask my colleagues to join me in sending our best wishes and congratulations to Bell on its 90th anniversary. This small, diverse, vibrant community makes residents proud and visitors feel at home. I expect more great things to come in Bell's future.

HONORING FIRST SERGEANT WILL WILLIAMS, U.S. ARMY (RETIRED)

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor First Sergeant Will Williams, U.S. Army, Retired, of Round Rock, Texas, for his selfless dedication and service to our nation and his continued, unparalleled contributions to his community. I am honored to award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

Following his enlistment in 1976, SGT Williams contributed 24 years of service that included deployments from Panama and Somalia, to Desert Shield and Desert Storm as an Army Ranger, Small Weapons Specialist with the 2nd Division. His commitment to keeping our nation safe is in his blood. Three generations of his family served in combat roles in the United States Army, and among the three they share 4 Bronze Star Medals.

SGT Williams' service and sense of duty did not culminate with his military service. Upon returning to Round Rock, SGT Williams dedicated his civilian life to the uplifting and betterment of his community. In 2013, he helped raise $50,000 for Dell's Children's Hospital and over $10,000 for the Ronald McDonald House. In Round Rock, SGT Williams organized a food drive, sent out a care package to deployed soldiers, and provided clothing and supplies to 300 foster kids through Project Care.

His service has been recognized and appreciated throughout the community. SGT Williams was recognized with the Service to Mankind Award by the Round Rock Sertoma Club, received the Leadership Award from the ''Heart of Texas Award'' organization, and was honored with the Governor's Lone Star Achievement Award from Texas Governor Greg Abbott.

I commend First Sergeant Will Williams' selfless service to his community and nation. His commitment to excellence and citizenship reflect the best values we hold as Americans. I join his family, friends, and colleagues in saluting his great work and dedication to our country.

H.R. 732, STOP SETTLEMENT SLUSH FUNDS ACT OF 2017

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to today in opposition to the so-called Stop Settlement Slush Funds Act of 2017 (H.R. 732).

The Department of Justice has long had the authority to enter into and enforce settlement agreements on behalf of the United States government. This includes payments to third parties that help right the wrongs caused by an entity that has broken the law.

For instance, the government can negotiate a settlement that allows payments to groups like nonprofits that help aid in the recovery of the individuals and communities hurt by unlawful conduct. These third-party payments are particularly important when it is impossible

to quantify all of the harm done, as is often true of environmental cases.

When a corporation responsible for dumping waste into a waterway or emitting pollutants into the air agrees to this type of settlements, the non-profits they pay restore coastlines, rebuild ecosystems, and often coordinate clean-up activities. This legislation threatens that critical remediation and recovery work.

The Stop Settlement Slush Funds Act of 2017 ends this common-sense practice by prohibiting the U.S. government from entering into or enforcing settlement agreements that require payments to third parties. It also makes it much more difficult to provide relief for damage that is more generalized and non-quantifiable. When a power plant dirties the air of a community, the number of visits to the doctor or new cases of asthma cannot be precisely measured. That does not mean that they should not be held responsible for the harm they caused.

House Republicans have used the first 10 months of this Congress to do little more than push policies that reduce corporate accountability and line the pockets of corporate bad actors. I oppose the Stop Settlement Slush Funds Act of 2017.

TRIBUTE TO ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF IOWA

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Animal Rescue League of Iowa for being named the 2016 501(c) of the Year at the Des Moines East and South Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony earlier this year.

The Animal Rescue League (ARL) of Iowa is the largest nonprofit animal shelter in Iowa. ARL cares for thousands of animals every year, and offers a wide range of services to the public. From adoption, behavior training, spay/neuter services, and education, ARL aims to help people become responsible pet owners, as well as to help prevent animals from ultimately ending up in shelters.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent non-profit organizations like the Animal Rescue League of Iowa in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them for this outstanding recognition and in wishing them all nothing but continued success.

RECOGNITION OF MR. DARRYL DIORIO

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Darryl DiOrio for his forty-seven years of service and leadership in the Johnstown community.

Mr. DiOrio holds degrees from Saint Vincent College, the Pennsylvania State University and Saint Francis University.

He has devoted his entire career to working in the steel industry, including twenty years at Bethlehem Steel Corporation, six years as President and CEO of Johnstown Wire Technologies, and nineteen years as President and CEO of Gautier Steel Ltd.

Under Mr. DiOrio's leadership, Gautier Steel recovered from a near shutdown to a multi-million-dollar operation.

Furthermore, Mr. DiOrio saved thousands of family-sustaining jobs by helping keep both Johnstown Wire and Gautier Steel in the Johnstown area.

Mr. DiOrio's leadership and great care for the community will leave an impact on Johnstown for years to come.

I would like to congratulate Mr. DiOrio on his recent retirement and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN DENNIS DEWINE, U.S. ARMY

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the service and achievements of an esteemed and valued citizen, Captain Dennis DeWine, U.S. Army. He has dedicated himself to his community and nation and is an embodiment of the Army values of honor, loyalty, and selfless service. CPT DeWine is a fitting and worthy recipient of a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

CPT DeWine joined the Army in 1967, graduated Helicopter Flight School in 1968, and spent the next seven years as a helicopter pilot; twenty months of which were two tours of duty in Vietnam. As a testament to his valorous service in Vietnam, the President of the United States presented CPT DeWine with the Distinguished Flying Cross award for his actions above and beyond the call of duty. After being Honorably Discharged CPT DeWine was inducted into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame for Valor.

CPT DeWine's leadership skills have been invaluable throughout his post-military career. After rejoining civilian life, he became the founder, broker, and president of ERA Colonial Real Estate and Colonial Residential Properties, Inc. Despite his busy schedule, CPT DeWine remains dedicated to serving his community. He can often be found in jeans and boots working alongside his friends and neighbors. CPT DeWine's passion to serve is evident through his participation and leadership in numerous organizations, such as Central Texas Voices for Life, where he serves as Chairman. CPT DeWine has also proven his commitment to serving others through his company's efforts to successfully raise $100,000 for Muscular Dystrophy.

Despite his business and charitable commitments, CPT DeWine has found time to raise a closeknit family, volunteer in community organizations, and remain active in his church. With admiration and deep respect, I pay tribute to Dennis DeWine for his sacrifices and the lasting impact he has had on his community and country.

RECOGNIZING COLONEL MARK SHADE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I recognize and congratulate Colonel Mark Shade on his recent retirement after years of service as Deputy Commanding Officer of the United States Army Training Center and Fort Jackson. Colonel Shade was commissioned after graduating from The Citadel in 1989 and his first duty assignment was at Fort Hood Texas, as a Platoon Leader in support of the 1st Calvary Division during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. After attending the Combined Logistics Officer Advanced Course and the Petroleum Officers Course at Fort Lee, Colonel Shade reported to the 10th Mountain Division and served as the Assistant Support Operations Officer for 1st Brigade. He was then selected to Command Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Alpha Company of the 10th Forward Support Battalion.

After attending the Tactical Officer's Education Program at the United States Military Academy at West Point, and receiving his Masters in Education (Counseling and Leader Development) in 1999, Colonel Shade was the Tactical Officer for company A3. He then attended the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Colonel Shade served in a multitude of leadership and staff positions within the 25th Infantry Division, and was the G4 for United States Army Cadet Command at Fort Knox prior to assuming his final position at Fort Jackson.

Colonel Shade has multiple combat deployments to Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. He has been awarded two legions of Merit, four Bronze Star Medals, the Defense Meritorious Medal, three Army Meritorious Service Medals, two Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, the Combat Action Badge, and the Airborne Badge. I am grateful for the service of Colonel Mark Shade and his family to the Midlands community and to the United States of America.

TRIBUTE TO THE WAUKEE HIGH SCHOOL BOY'S SWIMMING TEAM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Waukee High School Boy's Swimming Team for winning their second consecutive team state championship on February 11, 2017.

In winning their consecutive title, the Waukee High School Boys Swimming Team doubled their team points from their first championship last year. During the meet, they were able to grab state championships in three individual events, and all three of their relay events finished runner up. I would like to congratulate each member of the Team:

Swimmers: Cameron Briggs, AJ Gainer, Davis Kuhlers, Jackson Kuhlers, Cameron Linder, Zach Linder, Augie Muenzenmay, Gus Muenzenmay, Mitchell Pollitt, Grady Rogers

Manager: Zach Bogaczyk

Coaches: Daniel Briggs and Cass Zorn.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by these students and their coaches demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize them today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating these young men for competing in this rigorous competition and in wishing them all nothing but continued success.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

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

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, November 2, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

NOVEMBER 7

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Ernest W. Dubester, of Virginia, Colleen Kiko, of North Dakota, and James Thomas Abbott, of Virginia, each to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

SD–342

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 1591, to impose sanctions with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

SD–538

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet

To hold hearings to examine advancing the Internet of Things in rural America.

SR–253

NOVEMBER 8

9:45 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to consider S. 1693, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of that Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sex trafficking, S. 1668, to rename a waterway in the State of New York as the ''Joseph Sanford Jr. Channel'', and the nominations of Dana Baiocco, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, James Bridenstine, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Neil Jacobs, of North Carolina, and Nazakhtar Nikakhtar, of Maryland, both to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, Bruce Landsberg, of South Carolina, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, Raymond Martinez, of New Jersey, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and Diana Furchtgott-Roth, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of Transportation, and Leon A. Westmoreland, of Georgia, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine protecting consumers in the era of major data breaches.

SD–106

10 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Kathleen Hartnett White, of Texas, to be a Member of the Council on Environmental Quality, and Andrew Wheeler, of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

SD–406

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Kirstjen Nielsen, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the impact of lawsuit abuse on American small businesses and job creators.

SD–226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine S. 1400, to amend title 18, United States Code, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, and S. 465, to provide for an independent outside audit of the Indian Health Service.

SD–628

NOVEMBER 14

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold an oversight hearing to examine hurricane recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands.

SD–366

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Résumé of Congressional Activity.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S6937–S6974

Measures Introduced: Ten bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2049–2058, and S. Res. 319–320. **Page S6970**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 279, reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and with an amended preamble. **Page S6970**

Measures Passed:

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 320, supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, commending domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence victim service providers, crisis hotline staff, and first responders serving victims of domestic violence for their compassionate support of survivors of domestic violence, and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should continue to support efforts to end domestic violence, provide safety for victims of domestic violence and their families, and hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable. **Page S6973**

Eid Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Allison H. Eid, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit. **Pages S6944–63**

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

By 56 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 258), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S6944–45**

A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding Rule XXII, that at 11:30 a.m., on Thursday, November 2, 2017, there be 30 minutes of post-cloture time remaining on the nomination, equally divided between the Leaders, or their designees, and that following the use or yielding back of that time, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination. **Page S6963**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, November 2, 2017. **Page S6973**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 60 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. EX. 257), Joan Louise Larsen, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Pages S6938–44, S6974

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Michael D. Griffin, of Alabama, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Randall G. Schriver, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Joel Danies, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Douglas Webster, of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education.

Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

James R. Sweeney II, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana.

Routine lists in the Foreign Service.

Pages S6973–74

Messages from the House: **Page S6967**

Measures Referred: **Page S6967**

Executive Communications: **Pages S6968–70**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S6970**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S6970**

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S6970–71

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S6971–72

Additional Statements: Page S6967

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Pages S6972–73

Privileges of the Floor: Page S6973

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—258) Pages S6944, S6945

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:37 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 2, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S6973.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of David J. Ryder, of New Jersey, to be Director of the Mint, Department of the Treasury, and Hester Maria Peirce, of Ohio, and Robert J. Jackson, Jr., of New York, both to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Scott Garrett, of New Jersey, to be President, Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President, Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, and Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, and Claudia Slacik, of New York, each to be a Member of the Board of Directors, all of the Export-Import Bank, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of James Bridenstine, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, who was introduced by Senator Inhofe, Dana Baiocco, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and Nazakhtar Nikakhtar, of Maryland, who was introduced by Senator Wicker, and Neil Jacobs, of North Carolina, both to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Irwin Steven Goldstein, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Rebecca Eliza Gonzales, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, Lisa A. Johnson, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia, James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador to Luxembourg, who was introduced by Senator Isakson, and Sean P. Lawler, of Maryland, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service, all of the Department of State, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

ENERGY AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy concluded a hearing to examine energy and international development, after receiving testimony from Rachel Kyte, Sustainable Energy for All, Washington, D.C.; Todd J. Moss, Center for Global Development, Bethesda, Maryland; Joao Talocchi, Purpose Climate Lab, New York, New York; and Paul J. Mitchell, Energy Systems Network, Indianapolis, Indiana.

MODERNIZING TAX POLICIES

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine building tribal economies, focusing on modernizing tax policies that work for Indian country, after receiving testimony from Carl Marrs, Old Harbor Native Corporation, Anchorage, Alaska; Liana Onnen, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Mayetta, Kansas; and Dante Desiderio, Nafoa, Washington, D.C.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, who was introduced by Senator Fischer, Terry A. Doughty, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, who was introduced by Senator Cassidy, Terry Fitzgerald Moorer, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama, who was introduced by Senator Shelby, and Mark Saalfield Norris, Sr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, who was introduced by Senators Alexander and Corker, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE IN 2016 ELECTIONS

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee concluded a hearing to examine social media influence in the 2016 United States elections, after receiving testimony from Colin Stretch, Facebook, Menlo Park, California; Sean J. Edgett, Twitter, Inc., San Francisco, California; and Kent Walker, Google, Mountain View, California.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 19 public bills, H.R. 4200–4218; and 3 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 89; and H. Res. 599, 602, were introduced. **Pages H8384–85**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H8386–87**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 3441, to clarify the treatment of two or more employers as joint employers under the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–379);

H.R. 3387, to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to improve public water systems and enhance compliance with such Act, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–380);

H. Res. 600, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 849) to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board (H. Rept. 115–381);

H. Res. 601, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3922) to extend funding for certain public health programs, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–382); and

H.R. 2201, to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to exempt certain micro-offerings from the registration requirements of such Act, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–383). **Page H8384**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Marshall to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H8297**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:16 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H8306**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Michael W. Waters, Joy Tabernacle AME Church, Dallas, TX. **Page H8306**

Unanimous Consent Agreement: Agreed by unanimous consent that it be in order at any time to consider House Resolution 599 in the House, if called up by the chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or his designee; that the resolution be considered as read; that the previous question be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except for one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by Representative Royce and Representative Khanna or their respective designees; and that notwithstanding any previous order of the House, the provisions of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution shall not apply to House Concurrent Resolution 81. **Page H8318**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Encouraging Public Offerings Act of 2017: H.R. 3903, amended, to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to expand the ability to use testing the waters and confidential draft registration submissions, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 419 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 599; **Pages H8318–20, H8361–62**

Amending the Securities Act of 1933 to codify certain qualifications of individuals as accredited investors for purposes of the securities laws: H.R. 1585, amended, to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to codify certain qualifications of individuals as accredited investors for purposes of the securities laws; **Pages H8320–23**

Helium Extraction Act of 2017: H.R. 3279, to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to provide that extraction of helium from gas produced under a Federal mineral lease shall maintain the lease as if the helium were oil and gas; **Page H8323**

Repealing the Act entitled "An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation": H.R. 1074, to repeal the Act entitled "An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation"; **Pages H8323–24**

Providing for the conveyance to the State of Iowa of the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land in Pottawattamie

County, Iowa: H.R. 2600, amended, to provide for the conveyance to the State of Iowa of the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land in Pottawattamie County, Iowa; **Pages H8324–25**

Indiana Dunes National Park Act: H.R. 1488, amended, to retitle Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park; **Pages H8325–26**

Foreign Terrorist Organizations Passport Revocation Act of 2017: H.R. 425, amended, to authorize the revocation or denial of passports to individuals affiliated with foreign terrorist organizations; and **Pages H8363–65**

Urging adherence to the "one country, two systems" policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of the Hong Kong: H. Res. 422, amended, urging adherence to the "one country, two systems" policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of the Hong Kong; **Pages H8365–68**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "Urging adherence to the 'one country, two systems' policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong.". **Page H8368**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:07 p.m. and reconvened at 5:16 p.m. **Page H8356**

Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 2936, to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, by a recorded vote of 232 ayes to 188 noes, Roll No. 598. **Pages H8326–56, H8356**

Rejected the O'Halleran motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Natural Resources with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with amendments, by a recorded vote of 189 ayes to 230 noes, Roll No. 597. **Pages H8359–60**

Pursuant to the Rule, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–36, in lieu of the amendments in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources now printed in the bill. **Page H8340**

Agreed to:

Schrader amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 115–378) that strikes "produce timber" as a forest management activity designated for Categorical Exclusion; **Page H8350**

Cárdenas amendment (No. 4 printed in H. Rept. 115–378) that requires the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with other relevant Departments, to conduct a study to evaluate the feasibility, safety and cost effectiveness of using unmanned aerial vehicles for the purposes of supporting wildfire response and suppression as well as forest restoration and management; **Page H8352**

DeFazio amendment (No. 5 printed in H. Rept. 115–378) that adds land exclusions to Sec. 913, including Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Wilderness Act, lands managed under the National Trails System; and **Pages H8352–53**

Pearce amendment (No. 7 printed in H. Rept. 115–378) that establishes a pilot program to demonstrate effective tools and techniques for safeguarding natural resources (by a recorded vote of 236 ayes to 184 noes, Roll No. 596). **Pages H8354–56, H8358–59**

Rejected:

Khanna amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 115–378) that sought to strike Subtitle B of Title III, the Forest Management Activity Arbitration Pilot Program, from the bill (by a recorded vote of 189 ayes to 232 noes, Roll No. 594); and **Pages H8350–51, H8357**

O'Halleran amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 115–378) that sought to strike sections 801 and 903 (by a recorded vote of 194 ayes to 226 noes, Roll No. 595). **Pages H8351–52, H8357–58**

Withdrawn:

LaMalfa amendment (No. 6 printed in H. Rept. 115–378) that was offered and subsequently withdrawn that would have directed OPM to create a "wildland firefighter" occupational series. **Pages H8353–54**

H. Res. 595, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2936) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 232 ayes to 184 noes, Roll No. 593, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 232 yeas to 184 nays, Roll No. 592. **Pages H8309–18**

Clerk to Correct Engrossment: Agreed by unanimous consent that, in the engrossment of H.R. 3903, the Clerk be authorized to make such technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to

reflect the actions of the House in amending the bill. **Page H8362**

Clerk to Correct Engrossment: Agreed by unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 2936, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section numbering and cross-referencing, and the insertion of appropriate headings. **Page H8362**

Providing official recognition of the massacre of 11 African-American soldiers of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion of the United States Army who had been captured in Wereth, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge on December 17, 1944: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Con. Res. 43, providing official recognition of the massacre of 11 African-American soldiers of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion of the United States Army who had been captured in Wereth, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge on December 17, 1944. **Page H8362**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H8318.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and six recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H8316–17, H8317–18, H8357, H8357–58, H8358–59, H8360, H8360–61, and H8361–62. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Committee Meetings

ACCOUNTABLE SOFT POWER IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held an oversight hearing entitled ''Accountable Soft Power in the National Interest''. Testimony was heard from Mark Green, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development.

SECURING CONSUMERS' CREDIT DATA IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL COMMERCE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection held a hearing entitled ''Securing Consumers' Credit Data in the Age of Digital Commerce''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT OF FIRSTNET: STATE PERSPECTIVES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of FirstNet: State Perspectives''. Testimony was heard from Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Virginia; Michael Poth, CEO, First Responder Network Authority; John Stevens, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, New Hampshire; and public witnesses.

EXAMINING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Examining the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Program''. Testimony was heard from Helen Albert, Acting Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

DATA SECURITY: VULNERABILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit held a hearing entitled ''Data Security: Vulnerabilities and Opportunities for Improvement''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT THE NORTH KOREAN REGIME

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''An Insider's Look at the North Korean Regime''. Testimony was heard from a public witness.

NET NEUTRALITY AND THE ROLE OF ANTITRUST

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held a hearing entitled ''Net Neutrality and the Role of Antitrust''. Testimony was heard from Maureen Ohlhausen, Acting Chairman, Federal Trade Commission; Terrell McSweeny, Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice held a hearing on H.R. 490, the ''Heartbeat Protection Act of 2017''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Executive Office for Immigration Review''. Testimony was heard from James McHenry, Acting Director, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Department of Justice.

OVERVIEW OF 16 YEARS OF INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on National Security held a hearing entitled ''Overview of 16 Years of Involvement in Afghanistan''. Testimony was heard from John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

PROTECTING SENIORS' ACCESS TO MEDICARE ACT OF 2017; COMMUNITY HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS IMPROVE OUR NATION ACT OF 2017

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 849, the ''Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2017''; and H.R. 3922, the ''Community Health and Medical Professionals Improve Our Nation Act of 2017''. The Committee granted, by record vote of 7–3, a closed rule for H.R. 849. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The Committee granted, by record vote of 7–3, a closed rule for H.R. 3922. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment printed in part A of the Rules Committee report, modified by the amendment printed in part B of the Rules Committee report, shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Chairman Walden and Representatives Guthrie, Thompson of California, Paulsen, Pallone, Duncan of Tennessee, and González-Colón of Puerto Rico.

THE FUTURE OF LOW DOSE RADIATION RESEARCH

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled ''The Future of Low Dose Radiation Research''. Testimony was heard from John Neumann, Director, Science and Technology Issues, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

IMPACT OF RUSSIAN ADVERTISEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Russia Investigative Task Force held a hearing entitled ''Impact of Russian Advertisements on Social Media''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Mark T. Esper, of Virginia, to be Secretary of the Army, Robert L. Wilkie, of North Carolina, to be Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Joseph Kernan, of Florida, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence, and Guy B. Roberts, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the potential for oil and gas exploration and development in the non-wilderness portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, known as the ''1002 Area'' or Coastal Plain, to raise sufficient revenue pursuant to the Senate reconciliation instructions included in H. Con Res. 71, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 807, to provide anti-retaliation protections for antitrust whistleblowers, and the nominations of Gregory G. Katsas, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, Jeffrey Uhlman Beaverstock, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama, Emily Coody Marks, and Brett Joseph Talley, both to be a United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama, Holly Lou Teeter, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas, and Matthew G. T. Martin, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina, and Christina E. Nolan, to be United States Attorney for the District of Vermont, both of the Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled ''The 2017 Hurricane Season: A Review of Emergency Response and Energy Infrastructure Recovery Efforts'', 10:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Concerns Over Federal Select Agent Program Oversight of Dangerous Pathogens'', 10:45 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, hearing entitled ''Sustainable Housing Finance: Private Sector Perspectives on Housing Finance Reform, Part II'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 3249, the ''Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program Authorization Act of 2017''; H.R. 1730, the ''Combating Anti-Semitism Act of 2017''; H.R. 3317, the ''Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation Act''; and H.R. 4203, the ''Combat Online Predators Act'', 10:30 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, hearing on H.R. 221, the ''Hydrographic Services Improvement Amendments Act''; H.R. 1176, the ''Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act''; and S. 140, to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, markup on legislation on the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2017; legislation on the Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service Act of 2017; H.R. 1132, the ''Political Appointee Burrowing Prevention Act''; H.R. 3076, the ''Creating Advanced Streamlined Electronic Services for Constituents Act of 2017''; H.R. 4043, the ''Whistleblower Protection Extension Act of 2017''; legislation to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend the authority to conduct telework travel expenses test programs, and for other purposes; legislation on the Settlement Agreement Information Database Act; H.R. 3121, the ''All-American Flag Act''; legislation on the Preparedness and Risk Management for Extreme Weather Patterns Assuring Resilience and Effectiveness Act of 2017; H.R. 1850, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 907 Fourth Avenue in Lake Odessa, Michigan, as the ''Donna Sauers Besko Post Office''; H.R. 2672, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 520 Carter Street in Fairview, Illinois, as the ''Sgt. Douglas J. Riney Post Office''; H.R. 2673, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 514 Broadway Street in Pekin, Illinois, as the ''Lance Corporal Jordan S. Bastean Post Office''; H.R. 3821, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 430 Main Street in Clermont, Georgia, as the ''Zachary Addington Post Office''; and H.R. 3893, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Mathe Avenue in Interlachen, Florida, as the ''Robert H. Jenkins Post Office'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment, hearing entitled ''Examining the Regulation of Shark Finning in the United States'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, hearing entitled ''Putting Food on the Table—A Review of the Importance of Agriculture Research'', 10:30 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations, hearing entitled ''Operating or Rulemaking? A Review of SBA's Opaque Standard Operating Procedures Process'', 10:30 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Emergency Response and Recovery: Central Takeaways from the Unprecedented 2017 Hurricane Season'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 299, the ''Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017''; H.R. 1133, the ''Veterans Transplant Coverage Act of 2017''; H.R. 1900, the ''National Veterans Memorial and Museum Act''; H.R. 2123, the ''VETS Act of 2017''; H.R. 2601, the ''VICTOR Act of 2017''; H.R. 3634, the ''SERVE Act of 2017''; H.R. 3705, the ''Veterans Fair Debt Notice Act of 2017''; H.R. 3949, the ''VALOR Act''; and H.R. 4173, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the Veterans Crisis Line, 10:30 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Appearance of Carter W. Page'', 9 a.m., HVC–304. This is an open hearing in a closed space.

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 October 31, 2017

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in session	160	155	..
Time in session	966 hrs., 13′	692 hrs., 57′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	6,935	8,296	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	1,473	..
Public bills enacted into law	24	49	73
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	1	1	..
Measures passed, total	345	536	881
Senate bills	84	24	..
House bills	40	349	..
Senate joint resolutions	8	6	..
House joint resolutions	16	19	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	9	7	..
House concurrent resolutions	8	12	..
Simple resolutions	180	119	..
Measures reported, total	*242	*373	615
Senate bills	187	1	..
House bills	26	283	..
Senate joint resolutions	1	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	2	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	2	..	..
House concurrent resolutions	..	4	..
Simple resolutions	26	83	..
Special reports	13	5	..
Conference reports	..	..	..
Measures pending on calendar	177	98	..
Measures introduced, total	2,433	5,005	7,438
Bills	2,038	4,199	..
Joint resolutions	49	120	..
Concurrent resolutions	28	88	..
Simple resolutions	318	598	..
Quorum calls	3	1	..
Yea-and-nay votes	256	258	..
Recorded votes	..	332	..
Bills vetoed	..	..	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

*These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 180 written reports have been filed in the Senate, 378 reports have been filed in the House.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 3 through October 31, 2017

Civilian nominations, totaling 524, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	190
Unconfirmed	299
Withdrawn	35
Other Civilian nominations, totaling 785, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	760
Unconfirmed	25
Air Force nominations, totaling 5,617, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	5,594
Unconfirmed	23
Army nominations, totaling 6,570, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	6,552
Unconfirmed	18
Navy nominations, totaling 4,222, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	4,218
Unconfirmed	4
Marine Corps nominations, totaling 1,314, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	1,314

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	19,032
Total confirmed	18,628
Total unconfirmed	369
Total withdrawn	35
Total returned to the White House	0

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, November 2

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Allison H. Eid, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at approximately 12 noon.

Following disposition of the nomination of Allison H. Eid, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Stephanos Bibas, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, November 2

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 849—Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule). Begin consideration of H.R. 3922—Community Health And Medical Professionals Improve Our Nation Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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Congressional Record

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